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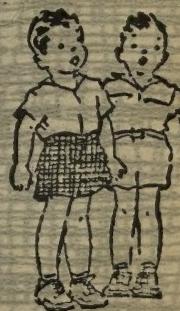
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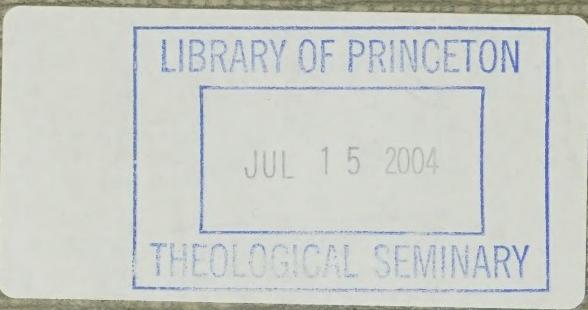


Religious Nurture in Nursery Class and Home

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RELIGIOUS NURTURE

in Nursery Class and Home



by MARY EDNA LLOYD

BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
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RELIGIOUS NURTURE IN NURSERY CLASS AND HOME

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INTRODUCTION

The Nursery Class in the Church School

ONLY a little more than a quarter of a century ago nursery classes in the church were unknown. Parents took their three-year-old children to the church school, however. The mother kept the youngest child with her unless this three-year-old went to the primary class with an older brother or sister. There was no special preparation for the religious development of the younger children and they often became confused or excited and upset things generally or the older children fussed over them to the despair of the teacher.

Compare this complete lack of planning for the three-year-olds with the best that is offered in nursery classes in church schools today. Real progress has been made in the last quarter of a century in understanding young children and meeting their needs. There is still much to be desired in many churches, for not all rooms labeled "Nursery Class" are really nursery classes. How can a church help the three-year-old? What is the purpose of a nursery class?

Purpose of the Nursery Class

The nursery class seeks to provide for the youngest members of the church family a happy introduction to the church school, the joy of finding friends there with whom they may play and work and share good times. Some of these are adult friends who are skillful teachers of little children.

The nursery class seeks to provide opportunities for the three-year-olds to learn to share, take turns, and play together. The nursery class leader attempts to find that way of leading little children that will best introduce them to a Christian way of living and playing together and then to interpret it for them.

There must be a homelike atmosphere that will lead to a sense of security and happiness for the child as he finds himself for the first time in a larger world. When there is such an in-

troduction, as the years go by he will gradually learn to think of the world as given by God to man for a home.

The nursery class leader will try to interpret religiously everything that comes into the life of each child in her group. This religious interpretation will be in the light of the teachings of Jesus who placed a little child in the midst. The Master Teacher met the needs of the individuals in his groups. He faced their problems and taught in the light of the questions that troubled them. Nursery leaders must meet the simple everyday needs of the three-year-olds in their groups if they would adequately minister to these little children. The child is in the midst. The leader will be watched by him. Her interpretation of Christian living as evidenced by her words, her actions, the way she plays and helps others to play, her relations with individual children and with their parents, her attitude to the natural world and its wonders, will teach religion.

It is hoped that each child in the nursery class will find his part of the church a happy place and that he will enjoy being in it. Frequently there will be short prayers. He will hear the name God mentioned in the prayer. Occasionally there will be a story. A very few carefully selected stories about Jesus will be introduced and repeated throughout the year. There will be songs for the child to sing, and songs that will be sung to him, but he will spend most of the time that he is in the group in informal play. In this play he will be guided to take his place as one member in a group who are learning to live the Christian life as the three-year-old naturally lives it.

Informal Procedure

Informal procedure in the nursery class may best be described as transferring the free home atmosphere to the church for a group of children. It is that way of working with little children in which the leader follows the suggestions of the child and is ready to interpret religiously the experiences that naturally arise from the choices of the children. Through informal procedure in a homelike situation the child is guided to a more social way of living.

The leader may have a well planned procedure for the day. It is a tentative one, of course. She may hope to guide the

children toward an appreciation of the work of the sexton, but it may happen that the children on that day are especially interested in something entirely different. She cannot follow her plan, but its very preparation has helped her to be alert to the special needs of children and her ability to adapt her plans to the leads of the children marks increase in her skill.

The nursery leader recognizes that the education of three-year-old children depends largely upon the contact between the leader and the child and between the children in the group. All the time the child is in the group he is learning to like or dislike the persons with whom he comes in contact and to enjoy or fear the situations in which he finds himself. The nursery class is the *church* for the little child. It follows that if the child finds himself in a happy situation he is more likely to acquire a pleasant association with the church and his experience there. As he makes this first step out of the home into the church, the nursery class leader makes the experiences of the child informal and homelike so that they will seem natural.

Play in the nursery class is used not merely for the entertainment of the children. It is through play, not listening, that three-year-olds learn Christian ways of behavior. Adults who are sympathetic to the needs of little children and are skilled in ways of teaching them guide this play. Gradually the children may learn Christian consideration of others *to the extent of three-year-old ability*. It is not to be expected that experiences in Christian living for these little children will be the same kind as those for their primary brothers and sisters nor for their parents. They are very different from the experiences of the sixty-year-old Bible class members. Through play and living together at church, the nursery class child may gain the foundations for Christian living in a group, for religious ideas, for worship that are parts of his normal religious development in the years to come. All ongoing experiences in his home and church will contribute to his religious growth. This point of view is fundamental to all work with nursery class children. The religious interpretation of the little child's own life, his security at church, his first adjustments to other children—these are the important features of the nursery class program. Without them the nursery class in the church school must fail completely to help the three-year-old religiously.

How to Use This Nursery Course

The course, *Religious Nurture in Nursery Class and Home*, is prepared from this point of view. This text is for the use of the teacher in the nursery class at church school, or for the mother in the home. Each child has his own needs that are different from the needs of every other child. For this reason, no text can be prepared to serve adequately in every situation. Each nursery class leader and every mother will need to adapt the suggestions to needs that arise. It is not expected that any suggested procedure will be followed in full. The suggestions in this book should serve as "points of departure." Those who guide little children religiously will feel free to follow the suggested ideas, or, basing the plans on them, to vary them to suit the special situation in which the course is used.

There are pupils' books to accompany this teacher's text. *My Book for Fall* (Part I) is the pupils' book for October, November, December. *My Book for Winter* (Part II) is for January, February, March. The April, May, June pupils' material is *My Book for Spring* (Part III) and that for July, August, September is *My Book for Summer* (Part IV).

These children's books have attractive large size photographs, with a story to accompany each one, for every Sunday in the quarter. In addition, there is a story to go with the outside four-color cover page picture, and one to accompany the four-color Bible picture on the third cover page.

The leader should have at least three copies of each one of the children's books. (See page 16 for suggested use.)

The pupils' books, *My Book*, also carry a section for the parents. There is a message for the parents that accompanies each picture and story. The nursery class leaders will read this section of *My Book* thoughtfully for their own help so that they may be able to discuss any suggestions with the parents.

Planning an Informal Procedure

The plan for informal procedure of a nursery class session will include informal play by individuals or small groups, singing, an occasional story and prayers. There will never be anything like a "circle talk." Many sessions will have no story.

When a story is used, it is generally told to individuals or to small groups of not more than three or four children at one time. Some Sundays there may be opportunities for several prayers. On other Sundays there will be no prayer. Even with most careful preparations and with consideration of the possible needs of each child, the leader will usually adapt and often abandon her plans in order to adjust to the situation as it develops.

The leader will plan to arrange the room in as homelike a way as possible. The dolls, doll bed, carriage and housekeeping toys may form a doll interest center, as they are arranged in one part of the room. The block interest center may include in addition to blocks, small trucks and perhaps small animals for which garages, stables or pens may be built. Toys, as color cone, peg wagon and floor train may form another interest center. The book center may include a small table large enough to accommodate a child on each side as they look at pictures. Two or three chairs may be grouped near the piano, two or three near the doll center. This grouping suggests informality.

Centers of Religious Guidance

It may be helpful if the nursery class leader knows the centers of religious guidance around which the year's work is organized. These are listed under six main divisions:

A SENSE OF SECURITY

This may be developed through stories and activities, around happy times at church, family fun, friendly attitudes toward the barber, postman, policeman, and doctor, and confidence in the dark and during thunder storms.

INSIGHTS INTO THE FAMILY LIFE

This is developed through stories, songs, and activities organized around helping daddy to rake leaves, making cookies with mother, enjoying food and saying "thank you," enjoyment of family fun, planning Christmas surprises, hearing the Christmas story, making a garden, helping with work at home with mother, helping to care for baby sister, giving a welcome to daddy, and fun at bedtime.

DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-RELIANCE

It is hoped that the children will grow in independence as

they learn to take turns, develop the ability to manage their wraps, put away toys, help with the dishes, wash their own hands, take their baths.

SENSORY EXPERIENCES

The child's eager quest for experience through his senses is sharpened through times when he rakes the leaves and enjoys their colors and rustling sound; makes cookies, eats good food, wraps Christmas packages, has fun in the snow, watches the Christmas candle, smells the pine and fir, makes a garden, enjoys Easter flowers, has fun in the dark, sings, relaxes during rest time, wonders over and enjoys such nature experiences as the frog in the pond and the cows and hens down on the farm. All these experiences and their interpretation form a foundation of a philosophy of life that is Christian.

PLEASURES OF GROUP LIFE

The child's joy in group life is established and deepened as the children experience fun in nursery class, take turns, sing together, enjoy a party, and learn to put away their toys.

MOMENTS OF WORSHIP

These times should be recognized throughout the course. Stories that lend themselves especially to the development of worship opportunities are "Bread and Butter," "Thank You, God," "Family Fun," "Mother's Christmas Story," "Daddy Tells Me the Christmas Story," "The Little Baby," "Going to See Jesus," "Ronnie's Breakfast," "I Like the Dark," "Finding a Surprise," "Good Milk to Drink," "Jesus and the Flowers," "Jesus and the Birds," "Making a Garden."

In many of these centers of religious guidance there is an overlapping of experiences, as for example in the case of thanking God for food. This is a family life emphasis but it is also a definitely religious emphasis that should lead to worship.

The experiences with the doctor and barber should establish a sense of security but both also provide sensory experiences that may be the center of religious guidance for young children. There is a similar overlapping in each of the centers of religious guidance.

A YEAR
IN THE
NURSERY
CLASS

O C T O B E R

POSSIBLE MATERIALS AND ACTIVITIES:

Possible stories for October (select from the stories in *My Book for Fall, Part I*): "Fun in Nursery Class," "My Teacher and I," "We All Go to Church," "Helping Daddy," "Marvin's Engine."

Possible songs for October (see pages 216-223): "The Church Bells," "Taking Turns," "Leaves Are Falling."

Possible activities for October: "Excursions" around the room and to rest room, to become familiar with the nursery class surroundings. Encouragement of doll play, block building, ball rolling, and following of interests that lead to co-operation of two or three children in small groups. Trip outdoors to look at church, listen to bell, chimes or clock and walk up and down steps. Trip outdoors to admire and gather colored leaves. Picking up colored leaves scattered on floor of nursery class room.

Introduction

THREE is no one time of the year that the leader of the nursery class can designate as the beginning of the church school year. Three-year-old children are likely to be brought into the nursery class at any time. This is the beginning of church school attendance for the child. He enters when he is ready to try the new venture. Some schools will have promotion to the kindergarten at stated times during the year. A few will have one promotion a year. Other schools will promote the child when he reaches his fourth birthday.

The practices of the church regarding promotion do influence the time of year when some children enter the nursery class. As October is quite generally recognized as the beginning of the church school year for older groups, it is likely that some families will bring the children who are about three so that they may start the year at this time. The children who have been attending for some time will know the usual procedure in the nursery class, but the new three-year-olds may experience a feeling of strangeness. This strangeness may border on homesickness. For each child in the group there may be the experience of seeing, playing with and talking to strangers, some of them adult persons, some the girls and boys in the group.

Unless the little child feels secure in the new situation, he cannot be happy. For this reason the nursery class leader will use the month of October as a time in which she hopes to orient the child to his surroundings. She will bear in mind that every time a new child enters the group it will be necessary to repeat this process for that child. There is need for the discovery of the room as a happy place with friendly persons. For the other children in the group, there is need to guide toward friendly acceptance of the new child.

There should be ample opportunity for the children to get acquainted with the leaders, with one another, and also with the room, and the equipment, including toys. The leaders should make sure that the children know their names—"My name is Miss Baker. What is your name?" may be a game. Frequent use of the names of the children and leaders will help individuals to become acquainted with the group. Such games as "Ball Rolling," or the "Get-acquainted-game" (see page 199) are helpful in establishing security and making the child feel happy and at home. This game playing is a much better plan than for the leader to attempt to force a conversation or to urge a little child to answer questions or listen to a story or look at pictures or even to join a music group. The little child's happiness is largely dependent upon forgetting himself and finding the church school as homelike a situation as possible.

Another need in October is to show the children how to use toys. For example, balls are for rolling, blocks are for building. This expresses the positive use. Abuse of playthings frequently

occurs because the children do not know the possibilities for using the toys in the right way.

In preparation for her month's work, the leader should write letters to the parents of all children enrolled in the nursery class. She will enclose four or five strips of paper muslin in each letter. On each little strip the child's name has been typed. The leader will request that these strips be fastened in the child's fall and winter hats, coats, zipper suits, and overshoes. Inexpensive paper muslin may be purchased by the yard. The names should be typed before cutting. Each strip should be about $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches by 3 inches to allow for turning in the edges. New name slips may be provided by the leader when seasonal changes require different wraps.

The letter should carry a welcome to new members and should outline briefly for all parents an explanation of some of the informal procedures planned for the fall and winter work and what the leader hopes to accomplish during the first quarter of the church school year. (See pages 224-233 for further suggestions about parents' groups.)

The leader will wish also to point out ways in which the parents may further at home the work of the nursery class, such as

(a) The use of prayers not only at night when the joys of the day are recalled but also at meal time or at any time during the day when the parent and child enjoy together a beautiful sunset or a flower or an especially happy time.

(b) Frequent mention of the name of the superintendent and teachers of the nursery class and of other children in the group so that the child gradually may associate names with persons and so may feel better acquainted.

(c) Use of the songs in the pupils' book, *My Book for Fall*, Part I.

(d) Definite plans to read or tell to the children the stories in the pupils' book, *My Book for Fall*, Part I.

(e) Suggestions that both the father and mother read and discuss the material for the parents in the pupils' book, *My Book for Fall*, pages 32-48.

(f) Suggestion that the parents explain to the child that he is to wait for them each Sunday, in the nursery class room, until they come for him.

The leader will plan to read the entire pupils' book, *My Book for Fall*, Part I. She will note the material for the parents, pages 32-48, and will seek ways to supplement these suggestions as she works with the child in the nursery class. The leader will sign her name in two places in the book. She will sign the letter to the child on the inside cover page and the letter to the parents on page 33.

The leader should not attempt to follow the suggested arrangement of this book with any feeling that she must fit her nursery class plans to it. The suggestions are flexible. Each leader will study the needs of every child in her group and will meet them as they arise. The suggestions in this book are to be used as points of departure, guides, source materials, suggestions upon which the leader will build her own plan. Many times, after having carefully planned the procedure for Sunday, the leader will find that it is necessary to abandon it completely.

The leader should have three copies of *My Book for Fall*, Part I. One of these she will keep as it is so that she may have it for use as suggested in the following Sunday by Sunday procedures. The other two books she will use for cutting and mounting the pictures on the inside and on the cover pages.

The outside cover page (front and back of book) forms one large four-color picture. This may be mounted on oak tag, mounting paper or beaverboard and be filed ready for use.

On the inside of the last cover page is a four-color picture of the "Gran Duca Madonna." This picture should also be mounted and filed ready for use.

Each picture that accompanies a story may likewise be carefully cut, mounted and filed.

Perhaps the leader and her assistants will cut and mount these pictures when they meet to plan the work for the quarter and to evaluate their work of the last quarter (see page 160).

First Sunday

GETTING READY FOR THE SESSION

The room should be arranged to arouse a child's interest. Four or five books including pupils' book, *My Book for Fall*, Part I, or several mounted pictures from *My Book for Fall*, may

be on the table. Such books may be included as: Baruch, *Two Bobbies*; Martin, *The First Picture Book*; and a copy of *The Real Mother Goose*. Included should be the ten-cent editions of the old favorites *Peter Rabbit*, *The Three Little Kittens* and *Baby's First Book*. Chairs should be placed near the table. Doll housekeeping furniture may be on one side of the room with a few chairs placed informally near by. A bouquet of flowers may be arranged on a low table near the piano. Perhaps two or three chairs may be placed near the piano also. Two large balls may be on the floor across the room from the doll corner. Blocks and small toys such as automobiles and trucks may be on the floor near the dolls. Pictures of children playing and children going to church should be thumb tacked on the dado or screen, or placed on the table where the children may examine and discuss them.

There should be a place provided for the children's wraps. The hooks should be low enough so that the children may learn to take off their own wraps, put them on hangers, and place them on these hooks. If possible each child may have his own special hook marked with a picture or a large gummed seal which the children can see without effort. For example, one child may have a picture of a duck, another a doll, a third flowers, and so on. The leader and her assistants should have a record of these identification seals so that they will know which seal belongs to which child and may help him always to place his wraps beside the seal that is his and to be able to recognize his own seal until he becomes accustomed to it. If this device is used, the name tags for the wraps (see page 15) will not be necessary.

WHEN THE CHILDREN COME

Be sure to note any special interests of the children for future reference. Encourage discussions of how the family came to church, such as in automobiles, or by street car or whether they walked.

AN OPPORTUNITY TO GET ACQUAINTED WITH THE ROOM

Take time to let the children get well acquainted with the room, the toys and where they are kept. This may be done

in small groups or may be carried on with individual children. There should be enough assistants to help all the children in the group to feel happy and at home, but not too many adults lest the children be overawed. One adult to every five children should prove sufficient to carry on procedures in the nursery class group.

Probably some of the children will have brought an offering. The offering is not stressed in the nursery class, but a small offering plate or basket may be provided and the child should be encouraged to put in any money that he has brought as soon as he enters the room. This avoids the difficulty of having the money dropped on the floor or put in the child's mouth or placed somewhere and forgotten, or held in his hand so that he cannot play with the toys. The container is called the plate or basket or whatever it may be. No symbolic term is applied as "love basket." Symbolism is confusing to nursery class children. Put the money container where the children cannot help themselves to coins and so start unnecessary problems. Giving money has little meaning to the three-year-old.

If the child asks any question about the money, it may be explained that his offering helps to pay for his new books, and for the electric light bill. It helps to pay the person who keeps the room clean and for coal to keep the church warm in winter. This gives tangible explanation to the little child. He knows that certain bills are paid in the home. He is far too young to gain any real understanding of an explanation of the various agencies or missionary enterprises of the church.

If the leader wishes, the child may be taken by the hand and led around the room. This may be the fun of "going for a walk around the room" to discover where the toys are kept and what the other children in the room are doing. Those children who do not wish to "go for a walk" may continue their play. Some may build with blocks. Some may play with dolls. Some may choose to sit near the piano and listen as the pianist plays softly. Through careful planning the leader may divide her time so that each child in the group has an opportunity to be with her.

It is important that the children be taken into the rest room so that they may know where they will be taken when they wish to go to the toilet. In no case will there be more than

two or three children in any one group who take this walk of discovery around the room.

The pianist may play an instrumental selection (see page 215). Some child may request a familiar piece of music or a song. The pianist, of course, will comply with the request whenever possible. She may play "The Church Bells" (see page 216) and may sing it to the children or she may sing "Taking Turns" (see page 217). When the song "Taking Turns" is used the leader will be sure that the children understand what it means to take turns. Nell plays with the doll for a little while and gives it to Mary. It is Mary's turn to play with the doll. Bobby and Ralph use the floor train, then they give it to Tom and Harry. It is their turn. Such simple explanations interpret for the child the meaning of the words in the song.

It is quite likely that there will be no need for a story or song on the first Sunday but the children will receive their books to carry home. The leader will plan to show these books to each child in turn if the group is small. Otherwise she will show them to groups of two or three children at a time. She will try to help them to understand that this is their own book. They will take it home and mother and daddy will read the stories to them and help them to learn the songs that are in it. They may look at the pictures. She can explain that they will see the same book here in nursery class but that this is their own book to keep at home. She will call attention to the fact that each book has the child's name on the inside cover page. The book should be called to the attention of the parents or of the person who comes for the child. The letter to the parents will be noted. Much should be made of the fact that this is a special book for the religious nurture of the child at home.

During the week the leader will be sure to see that the books are sent or she will carry them to each child who was absent on Sunday.

As suggested on page 16 the leader will have signed the letter to the child on the inside cover page and the letter to the parents on page 33. She will be kept busy throughout the session and will not have time to sign these letters during the church school hour. She will need to be free from all such details so that she may give full attention to the children. The leader should be sure to allow time for the children to put away

their toys and to put on their own wraps before the parents arrive.

There will be no formal dismissal. As parents come for their children, they will be greeted, and the child will go. If there is a church nursery during the morning worship service the children who are to stay will continue their informal play, instead of getting their wraps.

Second Sunday

GETTING READY FOR THE SESSION

In preparation for the Sunday's work, the leader will need one of the pupils' books that she may take apart, cut and mount the pictures and have them ready for use not only this Sunday but at any time that she needs them throughout the month. Mounting the pictures on neutral shade mounting paper or on beaverboard if she wishes something more permanent, will make it possible to reuse them many times. Rubber cement is more satisfactory than paste for mounting the pictures. The rubber cement should be spread evenly on the entire back of the picture and also on the mount. After placing the picture on the mounting, a rolling pin may be used to smooth it. If done carefully, there will be no wrinkles. If mounted on paper, it will be well to place the picture under a weight, perhaps under a large book or a bundle of magazines. This will avoid wrinkling from moisture. (See page 192 for further discussion of pictures for use with nursery children.)

The room should be arranged as far as possible as it was on the first Sunday unless the first Sunday's experience showed that a different arrangement would provide better for the happiness of the children. It is well to make as few changes as possible in the nursery class room. This is especially true in the early part of the year while the situation is still a strange one for many children. Young children welcome the familiar and feel more at home if the interest centers such as the doll center, the book center, the small toy center, and the block center are to be found in about the same place each Sunday.

WHEN THE CHILDREN COME

If any of the children are homesick or shy or fearful of a strange situation they should be reassured by placing toys or books near them. Perhaps one leader may sit or stand close by but she will not force herself upon the child, nor will she try to make him answer any questions.

As each child is greeted he should be encouraged to remove his own wraps. The children can begin to take off their own wraps and to hang them up. This will probably be a parent education need more than a child need. If done in a friendly manner, the parents usually understand after a few weeks that each child in nursery class is supposed to remove his wraps, so far as possible, for himself.

Continue individual play, but, if possible, bring two or three children together into a group. Perhaps they may be interested in block play or in the "Get Acquainted Game" or in rolling the ball (see page 199). In the same way groups of two or three children may be brought together for conversation or the song "Church Bells" (see page 216) may be played or sung to the children. It is not likely that a story will be told this Sunday, but, if the leader wishes to tell a story, she may choose either "Fun in Nursery Class" or "My Teacher and I" (*My Book for Fall, Part I*).

The leader and her assistants will follow the interests of the children. These first few Sundays of the church school year provide excellent opportunities to become acquainted with the likes and dislikes of the different children. A looseleaf notebook with a page for each child will help the leader to know her group better as she keeps a brief record for each child (see page 183).

The children may be interested in taking another walk around the room as they did on the first Sunday. Again they may visit the toy closet or chest, the doll center, book center, and small toy center. They will stop to look at any pictures that are put on the picture screen or dado. They should go into the rest room again so that they may be sure to know where it is. This investigation is an important part of getting acquainted with their surroundings. Much of the future happiness and sense of security that the child feels will depend upon such a happy introduction to the nursery class room.

It may be that there will be an opportunity this Sunday for a short prayer. Do not force it. If the opportunity comes, the leader may simply say, "Thank you, God, for our nursery class" or "We like to come to our church. Thank you, God. Amen." The prayer should be short and easily understood. All prayers for children should be addressed to God. The leader may close her eyes but there should be no insistence upon any special position or closed eyes. Some of the children will follow the example of the leader. A few may fold their hands but it is not likely that many will do so. Most of the children will watch, eager to see all that is done and not really understanding that this is prayer time in spite of the leader's brief statement that she is going to say "thank you, God" for happy times in our church. Prayer time can mean little to young children until it is interpreted for them through happy associations at home and in the church school.

Third Sunday

GETTING READY FOR THE SESSION

Again it is suggested that the room be arranged as nearly as possible as it has been on the other Sundays this month. The cover page of *My Book for Fall*, Part I, will have been mounted and made ready for use.

WHEN THE CHILDREN COME

The children should be encouraged to remove their own wraps as usual and to hang them up. Perhaps, the leader can guide general conversation as to how the children came to church school. Did they walk or come in a car or in the bus, or did mother and daddy pull them in an express wagon? Did they come with mother and daddy or with big brother or sister? The leader will not force any conversation but will encourage the children to talk.

The pianist may play "Church Bells" softly as the children arrive. Some of them will recognize the song and may begin singing "ding dong, ding dong" with the piano. The pianist and leader may sing the song with the children at any time during the session that they seem interested. It may be used

as the leader goes from child to child or from one small group to another. If any of the children have heard the song at home, they may request the pianist to play it.

If a story is used today the leader may tell "We All Go to Church" (*My Book for Fall, Part I*). It may be that two or three of the group would like to play "Getting Ready for Nursery Class" (see page 200). At the end of this game walk around the room as they play that they are going to church. Perhaps they will walk over to the piano and sing "Church Bells."

If the church has a bell or chimes, plan to have the children near the window or, if there is an outside door opening from the nursery class room, they may stand on the steps and listen as the bell rings or the chimes play. If there are no bells or chimes but a clock that strikes, attention may be called to the "ding dong" of the clock that calls fathers and mothers and boys and girls to come to church. Sometimes one church in the community has a bell and the members of other churches are called to their services by this one bell. If this friendly co-operation is true of the community in which you live, the nursery procedure will be influenced accordingly.

If the children are well enough acquainted, they may put on their wraps and go outdoors and walk around the church. The leader will mention the fact that this is *our* church. We come to our church and have a happy time in our nursery class. Daddy comes to this church. Mother comes to this church. But it is *our* church, too.

If any of the children express a desire to go inside, they may be taken into the sanctuary provided it is not used as an assembly for the Adult Department of the church school. Unless there is a desire expressed by the children, it will be better just to look at the outside of the building and perhaps to go up and down the steps. This seems a very simple procedure, but to a little child it may be quite an exciting experience.

While talking about the church or telling the story or going outside to walk around, there may be opportunities for the leader to stop and offer a brief prayer, "Thank you, God, for our church," or "We are glad we are big enough to come to church."

If the children have gone outdoors, plan to have them back in the nursery class room before the parents come for them. If

it is near dismissal time, they will not take off their wraps. As each child leaves, the leader may say, "Goodby, June. I'll see you next Sunday."

Fourth Sunday

GETTING READY FOR THE SESSION

There are alternate suggestions for this session.

Plan 1

The Halloween plans should be used the Sunday preceding Halloween. Occasionally it may be necessary to use the plans for this session on the fifth Sunday of October and use the plans for the fifth Sunday on the fourth Sunday. Be sure to use the Halloween plan on the Sunday before Halloween.

Often the little child is frightened by Halloween celebrations of older children in the family or neighborhood. Part of the religious responsibility of the church school leader is to build up a sense of security that will carry over into these everyday situations in the home life of the child. This is not to be interpreted as a time for dressing nursery children in grotesque costumes, but as one when an undergirding of security may save the little child from fright. The leader may decide to have a pumpkin cut with the features of a jack-o-lantern. She will not use a lighted candle because of the danger of fire. It is better to have no light inside, for the little child gains an adequate sensory experience by touching the eyes and nose and mouth. He feels the whole pumpkin and may carry it around the room with him. The jack-o-lantern is no longer strange and frightening. He knows what it is and how it is made.

WHEN THE CHILDREN COME

The room will be arranged as usual and again the pianist may play softly. As the children enter they will be encouraged to take off their wraps doing as much as possible for themselves, and to place their coats on the coat racks. Be sure to offer a choice. "Would you like to go over to the piano and sing this morning, or would you rather look at the pictures or build with the blocks?" By this time the leader will be sufficiently

acquainted with the interests of each child so that she may name one or two of the special interests of each child.

There may be a request from the children to go outdoors again today. If so, the leader will try to follow their suggestion. She will encourage the children to put on their own wraps. They may walk around to see the outside of the church or to hear the church bells or chimes or clock.

Any available pictures of Halloween fun will be mounted and placed on the screen or dado. Probably the leader will tell no story this Sunday, but plan for running conversation with one or two children at a time. The children may be encouraged to tell of plans they have heard older children talking about, of the "funny faces" they have seen in the store windows or of the suits or dresses they have seen being made for the older children. The leader will encourage them to talk about how funny different ones look when they put on the faces, and what good times children can have with jack-o-lanterns.

"When the bell rings you will know that either Mary or Bob is there and that is who is wearing that funny face. They are all dressed up in clothes that are not what they usually wear. They put on these other clothes and these funny faces to surprise us and make us laugh at them. When they ring the doorbell or knock on the window we can run to the window with mother and daddy and call to them 'Come on in. We want to see how funny you look.' "

In this way the children may become accustomed to the idea, and fear that is often aroused may be avoided. It can be explained that the older girls and boys are really trying to make each other happy by dressing up and they would like to make little children happy, too, and so they plan a surprise and come to the house. "Thank you, God, for friends who want to make us happy," might be the prayer that is used this Sunday.

The children may ask to carry the jack-o-lantern outdoors with them if they go out or they may wish to carry it around the room. Encourage them to do so for as they become acquainted with the unfamiliar pumpkin face they establish their own sense of security, as well as enjoy the sensory experiences of feeling and seeing.

Plan 2

If the leader does not wish to include the Halloween plans in the day's procedure, she may decide to use the picture and story "Marvin's Engine."

Pictures of engines may be mounted, ready for use. The children may tell of experiences they have had as they watched engines. Some children may have been on a train. To others, this would be a new experience. They may play riding on the engine, or on the train that the engine pulls.

If there is a Floor Train, or Junior Floor Train, it is likely that this toy will be in great demand. Painted cheese boxes may serve equally well as the train or engine.

Individual and group play may be encouraged. Perhaps the children will be interested in playing "Getting Ready for Nursery Class" (see page 200) again this Sunday.

*Fifth Sunday (or first Sunday in November)***GETTING READY FOR THE SESSION**

It will be well again this Sunday to have the room arranged as nearly as possible as it has been on the previous Sundays of the month.

WHEN THE CHILDREN COME

The pianist may play "Church Bells" as the children come in. By this time the song has probably become familiar to the children. Adults may tire of constant repetition of the same song, but the little child welcomes the familiar. He enjoys hearing the same song and the same story over and over again. "Sing it to me again." "Tell it to me," the child requests as he brings pictures or a favorite picture book. He wishes the story told in the same way the fiftieth time as it was told him the first time. For this reason the leader repeats the same story several Sundays in succession instead of telling a new story each Sunday. There may be one familiar story told to a group of two or three children and a different familiar story told another group of three or four children. When he hears a story

in the church school that mother has read him at home there is a familiar link between home and church.

When the children have removed their own wraps, encourage each one to choose which toys or the interest center he wishes to enjoy first this Sunday. "Would you like to play with the dolls or look at the book or build with the blocks this morning?" may be a question that will require some choice on the part of the child and yet will help him to feel welcome in his church school situation. The children should feel free to change from group to group or from interest center to interest center as they may wish. Usually this choice will come from the child, not from the urging of the teacher. Occasionally if a child continues with only one interest over a long span of time, the leader may try to interest him in some other activity. Sometimes continuing too long at one interest is an evidence of shyness or lack of initiative, or the child may have been told at home to "do as the teacher tells you." If the teacher does not tell him anything that he must do, he is lost until a suggestion is offered.

If possible the leader will provide an experience for the children with colored leaves for this Sunday. If there is a church lawn and trees or bushes on which the leaves are changing, she may take the children outdoors to enjoy them. They may look for especially pretty leaves, admire and name the colors, red, green, yellow, brown. This gives a sensory experience that may become truly religious as the leader helps them to recognize the fact that God has planned for the trees and the bushes as for every other beauty in the outdoor world.

If it is not possible to go outdoors the leader may carry in branches or handfuls of leaves. These may be placed on the picture screen, some may be laid on the table and perhaps a few of them may be scattered on the floor in one corner of the room. Near by the picture "Helping Daddy" (*My Book for Fall, Part I*) will be placed. Occasionally the kindergarten or primary leader may plan for the older children to bring some colored leaves to the nursery class on this Sunday. Encourage the nursery class children to mention the colors in the leaves, to match them with their dresses and hair ribbons and toys, and to feel the leaves.

If a story is told, "Helping Daddy" may be used, but it is likely that the children will talk about the picture "Helping

Daddy" and will enjoy the experience of picking up the leaves that have been scattered on the floor or of gathering beautiful leaves on the trip outdoors. "Thank you, God, for the beautiful leaves, red and green and yellow and brown" or "Thank you, God, for trees and leaves" or "We are so glad for the beautiful leaves on our trees. Thank you, God" may be the prayers that are used this Sunday.

If there is a trip outdoors, the children will be encouraged to put on their own wraps. Some may get their coats buttoned wrong, but encourage their efforts and so far as possible let the children wear their wraps as they have put them on. Allow the children plenty of time to get ready for the outdoor visit. Be sure to commend them for their success in managing wraps. Much of the success of the trip outdoors to see the leaves or to gather bright-colored ones will depend upon the spirit of joy and of worship evidenced by the leaders.

When the children return to the nursery class room they may wish to gather near the piano after taking off their wraps and play "Leaves Are Falling" (see page 219) or some of them may sit on the rug, some on the chairs, some may stand, a few may have dolls or toys or books in their arms. If they show any interest in singing they should be encouraged to do so. There may be opportunities for conversation as the children are encouraged to tell how they helped daddy at home or how they help mother or how they rake leaves or gather them. As usual there should be time for putting away toys and getting wraps before the parents arrive for the children.

NOVEMBER

POSSIBLE MATERIALS AND ACTIVITIES:

Possible stories for November (select from these stories in *My Book for Fall*, Part I): "Helping Daddy," "Making Cookies," "Bread and Butter," "Thank You, God," "Family Fun."

Possible songs for November (see pages 216-223): "The Church Bells," "Taking Turns," "Snow, Snow, Snow," "Leaves Are Falling."

Possible activities for November: Further opportunities to enjoy colored leaves. Opportunities to enjoy fall flowers. Continued interest in exploration of the nursery class room and in play with toys. "Party" lunch with bread and butter or graham crackers one Sunday and apples another Sunday. Feeling fruit in a bag and trying to identify it. Feeling and then planting tulip bulbs.

Introduction

IF THERE are four Sundays in October and five Sundays in November, use the suggested procedure for the fifth Sunday in October on the first Sunday in November.

The leaders usually think of November as the Thanksgiving month and the plans in the nursery class center on helping to develop a feeling of joy and happiness in the everyday living and a first expression of gratitude for them. The nursery class leaders should seek constantly to help the child to learn little expressions of courtesy such as "please" and "thank you," "I am sorry," and so on, by using these expressions in talking to one another and to the children. November is a month well suited to special emphasis of these courtesies.

As the children express thanks to each other, to parents or leader, they may be led to a sense of gratitude to God. The "thank you, God" seems to be a natural prayer. The nursery class leader needs to be very specific when she mentions causes for thanksgiving. "Thank you, God, for our good milk" or "Thank you for apples. Amen." Or "Thank you, God, for water to drink" or "We like our good bread and butter. Thank you, God, for bread and butter." It is less confusing to a child if one thing is mentioned at a time as the cause for gratitude. There may be a "thank you" prayer for good times in the nursery class. Later in the session there may be a "thank you" for the small pieces of bread and butter that the children share. Gratitude for food is frequently expressed in a "thank you" prayer.

Food is a tangible basis for gratitude because the child is so interested in it. But there are other joys for which he may feel thankful such as the pigeons in the church belfry, the yellow or white or rust colored chrysanthemums in the bowl, the colored leaves that have been mounted, the little baby in the home, the care of father and mother, fun at home, good times with friends in the nursery class.

Food should be served in the nursery class only when there is a reason for its use. The nursery class leaders need to avoid any danger of disrupting schedules or upsetting diets. The parents should understand that when luncheon is served in nursery class it will be limited to the simplest foods such as graham crackers, bread and butter, or apples, and that there will be only small servings of these foods. The luncheon group is an opportunity to learn through practice the use of grace at meal time. It provides a sensory basis for the experience of gratitude and an opportunity for practice of little social courtesies.

There is the problem of serving even a small lunch to the child who has been taught never to eat between meals. It would be most unfortunate if a "party lunch" in the nursery class should break down such valuable and necessary home teaching. For the physical, emotional and mental wellbeing of the child the church school nursery class and the home need to co-operate on the possibilities and plan of the luncheon.

During November opportunities for taking turns and shar-

ing toys should continue. If there are any new children in the group, they should be introduced to their surroundings. There may be continued visits outdoors to look at the outside of the church building or to see colored leaves on the trees and bushes. In preparation for her month's work the leader may list the following:

1. Consider possible sensory experiences of the children with objects that they may see, touch, taste, hear and feel.

(a) Plan to go outdoors to admire colored leaves and fall flowers or to bring them into the class room. Let the children smell and touch the flowers and touch the leaves and enjoy the pretty colors. In the northern states, there may be the additional sensory experience of feeling ice, and of seeing and feeling snow and frost.

(b) Plan for the sensory experience of touching fruit or vegetables in a bag and then guessing what the fruit is.

(c) Place emphasis on expressions of gratitude for food, church, home, happy times and so on.

(d) Be alert at all times for possible prayer and song experiences that may introduce the little child to a "second of worship."

The leader will plan to reread the entire pupils' book, *My Book for Fall*, Part I. She will note again the material for parents on pages 32 to 48 and will continue to supplement these suggestions as she works with the child in the nursery class.

The leader will read pages 29 to 40 in this text so that she may have a clear idea of the possible procedures for the month of November. Then she will be able to adapt these procedures to the work with her own group.

On any Sunday that the children have played so hard that they are tired, it may be well to spread a sheet on the rug in a protected part of the room and let them rest for a few minutes while they listen to the piano. The leader will lie down with the children. From three to five minutes of such relaxation may help each child to leave the group happy and relaxed rather than tense and irritable.

First Sunday

GETTING READY FOR THE SESSION

The leader may hunt through magazines for pictures of gaily colored fall flowers. These should be mounted and the pictures placed on a low table or tacked on screen or dado. The pictures for the stories suggested above from *My Book for Fall*, Part I, will have been mounted and will be ready to place on the screen also. (See suggestions for mounting, page 20.) A small bunch of fall flowers add a note of color and provide additional delightful sensory experiences. These should be placed on a low table or a chair where the children can admire and touch and smell them. Early arrivals may go with a leader to fill the vase with water and arrange the flowers. The children should be encouraged actually to do the work of arranging and the leader should commend their efforts.

There will be the same informal arrangement of the room as there was the previous month. Two or three chairs may be near the piano, two or three others near the book table, one or two near the doll center. The blocks may be placed on a rug and the small toys near them so that the children may sit on the rug as they enjoy these toys. If there is no table, the children may sit on the rug to look at the books and pictures.

WHEN THE CHILDREN COME

The pianist may play "Taking Turns" or "Church Bells" while the children are assembling. Each child should be greeted and encouraged to remove his own wraps and hang them where they belong. The time consumed in disposing of wraps is valuable. It may be an opportunity for friendly chatting together between the leader and the children. The children may have many interests to report or they may be shy and have little to say. They should not be forced to talk. The leader understands that a shy smile is most expressive of confidence. Willingness to tuck a hand into hers shows friendliness that a three-year-old cannot express in words. There should be the usual opportunity to select interests. "Would you like to play with the dolls or to go down the slide or to pull the peg wagon this morning?" If a child chooses to do nothing he should not be

urged. Perhaps his greatest pleasure for the first few minutes will be in observing the other children or in just being let alone so that he may look around the room as he wishes. Some children may wish to go over to touch, admire and smell the bouquet of fall flowers.

Some of the children may go to the piano when they hear the music. They may offer to sing with the pianist. No attempt will be made to "teach" the songs. The children will hear these songs sung over and over again by the leaders and will soon join in. At first they will usually sing a few words, then a phrase, then the entire song. The fact that the songs are in their books will probably mean that many of them have heard mother sing them at home and so the learning will be easier in the group.

The children may change from one activity to another at any time that they wish to do so but they should be taught to return one toy to its place before taking another. The doll should be carried back to the doll center rather than left in the middle of the floor. The book should go back to the book table and not be laid on top of the blocks. These reminders may need to be repeated over and over again, to each child individually for each piece of equipment every time it is used. Little children do not make transfers in their learning. They learn for each separate experience. Merely talking about putting away toys does not help them until they come to realize that they are to return the doll and replace the book and put the blocks back where they belong.

Putting away toys should not be stressed to the point of making the children unhappy. It is not done for the purpose of having a neat orderly room with which to impress the parents when they come for their children. It is merely one of the lessons in Christian consideration for others and in the assuming of responsibility that the three-year-old may learn. If he forgets to return the toy and no one reminds him before he begins playing with another toy, the leader will not interrupt him to insist that he carry the first toy back, but the next time she will be alert to the situation and will help him when he needs a reminder.

If a story is used this week, it may be that "Helping Daddy" will be selected and the children may take another trip outdoors

to see the colored leaves. If the leader wishes to begin a Thanksgiving emphasis, the story "Making Cookies" may introduce the thought of helping mother in the preparation of food at home.

There is still another possible activity for this Sunday. When churches have lawns or spaces around the building where the children may plant a few tulip bulbs, it is well to arrange with the sexton during the week to have a small space, possibly 12 by 18 inches spaded and ready for the planting of the bulbs. If this activity is carried out, the leader will show the bulbs to the children. She should be sure to pronounce the word bulb carefully and to explain that this bulb is a flower. The term may be a new one for children or they may associate it with electric light bulbs. We need to clear this point in their thinking. Let the children handle the bulbs so that they will have the "feel" of them. The leader may show a picture of a tulip in bloom and explain that it will be a long, long time before the bulbs will grow. There will be rain and snow and sunshine. Christmas will come. There will be more rain and snow and sunshine. Then some Sunday when they come to nursery class, they will find little green leaves growing. Soon they may find a pretty pink or red or yellow or white flower. It will be their tulip plant.

There is no "lesson" for very young children about burying a little bulb in the ground. They should merely experience the joy of actually planting the bulb. Trowels or strong spoons or stiff bladed knives will be needed to make the holes for the bulbs in the space that the sexton spaded. Let the children make the hole, place the bulbs in it, and cover the earth over the bulbs. This is long-time planning. The children may refer to the planting of the bulbs several times during the fall or winter. They may not mention it again but it is likely that the experience is sufficiently new to them so that it will be recalled during the winter months.

Use all available opportunities for prayer and singing.

As the children play around the room or as they plant the bulbs or look at the flowers or leaves in the room, the leader may speak about taking turns. Ruth and Helen use the color cone and then Donald and Mary play with it. They take turns. Frank digs the hole for the bulb and then it is Edith's turn.

There is a song about taking turns. The leader will sing the song "Taking Turns" (see page 217).

If the story, "Making Cookies," is told, it is likely that the children will mention any experiences they may have had, either real experiences or imaginary ones, when they helped mother to make a cake or cookies at home. "Thank you, God, for big girls and boys who can help mother" or "Thank you, God, for beautiful flowers. We are glad to plant bulbs" may be prayers that are used on this Sunday.

"Getting Ready for Nursery Class," "Getting Acquainted," "Leaves Are Falling," "Rolling the Ball" or "Follow the Leader" (see page 200) are games that provide opportunities for the children to become interested in one another and so to participate in group play with two or three children rather than spending the entire period following a solitary interest.

A CHECK-UP FOR THE NURSERY LEADERS

Do you know the parents of each child enrolled in the nursery class?

Have you visited in each home this fall?

What evidence have you that the children are becoming well-adjusted as members of a group; that they are gaining a sense of security at church?

How can you plan so that each child in the group will have the opportunity he needs for personal attention and help from his nursery class leader, by the end of December?

Second Sunday

GETTING READY FOR THE SESSION

This week the leader may select pictures of children or a family eating or pictures of such healthful foods as fruit, bread and butter, gelatin or vegetables. These will be mounted and placed on the table or tacked on the picture screen or dado along with the picture from *My Book for Fall*, Part I, that is selected for emphasis this Sunday. The leader may prefer to place the pictures on the screen after the children have come. If so, there will be an opportunity to talk about each one as it is put up. If any story is used, it will probably be "Bread and Butter."

The leader will plan to have slices of bread and butter spread and cut in small pieces. These may be wrapped in waxed paper and so will keep fresh until needed. Large paper napkins cut into quarters may be prepared so that each child may have one quarter.

Unless the children live in a section of the country where they see wheat grown and ground and the flour made into bread by mother, these processes are far beyond their understanding and should be reserved for the early primary years. Most nursery children know bread as the loaf is purchased at the bakery shop or grocery store. Begin with the familiar. Tracing the processes is not helpful to nursery class children. It is enough to explain "We say thank you to God for the sunshine and the rain. God made everything to grow so that we could have bread."

WHEN THE CHILDREN COME

The room should be arranged as on previous Sundays and the children encouraged to remove their own wraps and to choose their own interests. The pianist may be playing "Church Bells," "Taking Turns" or "Snow." If the song "Snow" is played or if it is used with the children, it will not be familiar as it does not appear in *My Book for Fall*, Part I, and so the children will not have heard it at home. While the children are following their own interests the pianist may play this song several times. Perhaps she will sing it and the children near the piano may hear the words and begin to sing it with her. It is suggested that different words be substituted for the word "snow." Perhaps the word "bread" or "mother" or "father" or "fun" or "flowers" may be substituted. Informal use of this song will make it familiar so that it may be used later during the lunch period.

After the children have played for a short time the leader may go from group to group and suggest that she has a surprise. Perhaps they would like to put away their blocks or their toys or bring their dolls with them and come over by the piano. It is not necessary that all the children stop their play to come. If some show no interest in the invitation, the leader will not urge them. Any children who are interested will go over to the

piano with her. If none of the children show any interest in the leader's invitation, she will go quietly to the piano and will sit on one of the small chairs and begin to unwrap the package of bread and butter.

Another leader will be ready to pass the paper napkins. It is quite likely that several of the children will be near the leader who has the bread and butter. If she wishes, the leader may ask the children to place chairs around the table and to put a napkin at each place. This makes a more formal "party." Whichever plan is chosen, the leader may show the bread and butter.

If she wishes to tell the story, "Bread and Butter," she may do so, but it is likely that it will be better just to talk about the good bread and butter. Before eating they will say "Thank you, God." The leader may say "I am going to close my eyes. We do not have to close our eyes when we talk to God but I like to. You may do as you wish." As she closes her eyes most of the children in the group will follow her example. "Thank you, God, for good bread and butter" or "We do like good bread and butter. Thank you, God" may be the prayer that is offered, or the leader may say "I know a thank-you song" and then sing "Snow" (see page 222) substituting the word "bread."

If the bread and butter has been passed before the prayer, it will be necessary to explain that the children should wait until everyone is served before they begin to eat. Unless the group is limited to only three or four children usually it is better to have the prayer before the bread and butter have been passed. The pieces are small so that food schedules will not be disturbed by luncheon between meals.

While the children are gathered there will be an opportunity for conversation. Some of the older children will be likely to talk. Some may tell about bread and milk, others about bread and jelly. This should be a happy time with opportunities to practice courtesy and to learn to pause for a prayer before food.

There may be discussions about the crust of the bread if it has not been trimmed. Encourage but do not attempt to force the child to eat the crust. Usually social approval of the group is enough. The leader will remain in the background as much as possible during the little luncheon. She will not hurry the children.

After the bread is eaten (there may be seconds or thirds if

the pieces are very small and the children wish more) the child should use his napkin. Then the napkin should be placed in the wastebasket or a paper bag.

Third Sunday

GETTING READY FOR THE SESSION

The procedure for this Sunday includes enjoyment of apples. If possible, the leader should secure three apples, one red, one green, and one yellow, and place them in a large paper bag.

WHEN THE CHILDREN COME

There will be the usual encouragement of self-help in removal of wraps. The children will find the room arranged as it has been on former Sundays and the same informal procedure will be followed with the opportunity for selection of their own interests. Playing "party" may have suggested housekeeping play. This will be encouraged. The children may relive incidents that have occurred in their own homes. In one group Jo Anne had a bottle from the toy box. Each Sunday for several weeks she pretended to pour something from the bottle into an imaginary spoon and carry it carefully across to the leader and say "Here dear. Open your mouth. Here is your cod-liver oil. Now swallow it." The leader obediently swallowed it and then remarked about how good cod-liver oil is. "It makes us grow and gives us rosy cheeks." "Ummm" Jo Anne would reply, "It is good, too." This was a real part of playing house for the little girl. Mother gave baby brother cod-liver oil, so Jo Anne must do the same thing when she played house. The leader should always be ready to enter into the play, but she will avoid forcing herself upon the children, talking all the time and having them carry out her ideas.

The suggestion to a few of the children that there is another surprise today will probably mean that the majority of the group will gather close to the leader as she brings out the paper bag with the apples in it. She will hold the bag together at the top with the opening arranged so that the children may slip in their hands but not see what is in the bag.

The leader will let each child guess what he feels. As soon as

he has guessed that it is an apple, ask him "what color do you think it is?" When he guesses the color, let him pick out the apple from the bag and show it to the group. Should he have guessed that the apple is green, there will be chuckles of laughter if the children find that the apple he pulls from the bag is red or yellow. Let him replace the apple and another child guess the color until all who wish have an opportunity to feel in the bag, guess the color and show which one they felt.

Then the children may sit on the chairs not arranged in a circle but informally placed close to the leader or they may take their places around the table. Whichever arrangement is decided upon, each child will be given a quarter of a paper napkin. The leaders will pare the apples since some parents do not wish their children to have the skins of fruit. The apples may be cut into thin slices and passed to the children.

The song "Snow" substituting the word "apples" may be sung as a grace or a brief prayer may be offered. "Thank you, God, for apples" or "Thank you, God, for apples, red, yellow, and green" or "We like apples. Thank you, God, for apples" are suggestions for prayers that may be used.

After the luncheon of apples, the children will again be encouraged to use their napkins to wipe their mouths and hands and then place the napkins in the wastebasket or paper bag.

Perhaps the children will have continued playing house. In that case the leader may pretend to be the mother and encourage the children to ask "Please, may I have some apple" or "Will you give me a piece of apple, please?" Encourage the use of the words "please" and "thank you." If a story is used, the leader will probably tell "Thank you, God" from *My Book for Fall*, Part I.

The leader will notice that several plans are suggested. One is the plan of just having a happy time together, feeling and guessing the color and then eating the fruit. The second is the idea of housekeeping play with the mother and children, and the third plan centers the thought on friends who bring apples to us and for whom we express gratitude. The leader will select the emphasis on which she wishes to center attention.

After the "party" the children may play ring rosy or continue their individual play as they have had this brief period of group play together.

The very thin slices of apple will make it possible for any child who wishes to have several servings. Be sure to allow time for the children to put away their toys and put on their wraps before the parents arrive.

Fourth Sunday

GETTING READY FOR THE SESSION

Plans for today will probably be quite similar to those of the previous Sundays in the month. There will be the same informal arrangement of the room, the same friendly suggestions to the children as they remove their wraps.

This Sunday the leader may plan another surprise in a large bag. The bag may have two or three apples, an orange, and a banana. The leader will be sure to consult the mothers before this session. She will explain to them that only a section of orange and a very small piece of banana will be served if the mothers are willing and if these fruits are included in the child's diet.

WHEN THE CHILDREN COME

Following the suggested procedure of the previous Sunday the children will be encouraged to put their hands in the bag and guess what they feel. After as many as wish have had an opportunity to guess what fruit is in the bag and have lifted out the piece they have felt to see what it is, the leader will follow the procedure similar to that of the previous Sunday as the fruit is enjoyed.

If a story is used this Sunday, "Family Fun" may be the one selected or the leader may wish to repeat "Thank You, God." All opportunities for prayers and songs should be used. The song "Taking Turns" may be sung several times as the children are at play or as they await their turn to feel in the bag of fruit. The song "Snow" with the substitution of the word "apple" or "banana" or "orange" may be used as a prayer song. There should be several opportunities for informal conversation and prayer should be spontaneous after such a happy time of play together.

Again the leader will plan for the children to have the toys put away and their wraps on by the time the parents arrive.

DECEMBER

POSSIBLE MATERIALS AND ACTIVITIES:

Possible stories for December (select from these stories in *My Book for Fall, Part I*): "Mother's Christmas Story," "Merry Christmas," "Christmas Morning," "Daddy Tells Me the Christmas Story," "The Little Baby."

Possible songs for December (see pages 216-223): "Taking Turns," "Snow," "Little Baby Jesus," "Christmas Morning."

Possible activities for December: Doll play. Jingling small Christmas bells. "Sign" card for the minister (or for the kindergarten or primary group or a shut-in in the church). Trim a small Christmas tree. Wrap a gift for the sexton (or pastor).

Introduction

DECEMBER should be an unusually happy month in the nursery class. Most of the children have been together as a group long enough to feel acquainted, and Christmas activities are always joyous ones for little children.

Throughout the month, the leader will try to encourage doll play and will make frequent mention of the care of mothers for the tiny baby. Mother cared for Bobby, Jeanne, Ruth, and Melvin when they were tiny babies, and Jesus' mother cared for him too. In this way the story of Jesus, the Christmas baby, may be introduced to the group. The leaders will wish also to build up a desire to plan surprises and happy times for others at Christmas. It is important that nursery children be helped to wish to share happy times and to plan for others rather than to

become accustomed to having everything done for them at Christmas. In the midst of the preparations, the planning of surprises for others and talking together about Jesus, the Christmas baby, the leader will be sure to meet prayer opportunities as they arise.

The leaders will read the suggested plans for each Sunday of December. They will also read the Christmas stories in *My Book*, Part I, and the accompanying message to the parents on pages 43 to 48. After careful consideration of the needs of the children the leader will choose the stories that she may use and the procedures that she will probably follow. She will notice that "Mother's Christmas Story" and "Daddy Tells Me the Christmas Story" are repetitions of the same story, once with the mother telling the story and again with the father telling it. This is purposely planned so that the child may have the familiar story retold and so that he may feel that both mother and daddy know the same lovely story about Jesus to tell him. It is suggested that these stories should not be used on successive Sundays. Probably "Christmas Surprises" may be used between them.

A number of activities are suggested. No leader should plan too many activities for her group. She will select the ones that will help to develop a joyous idea of the Christmas festival.

Some inexpensive gift as a handkerchief, a necktie, or perhaps a book "wrapped" by the children and with seals put on by them may lead to conversation about Christmas surprises. The gift may have been planned for the sexton who cares for the room and is recognized as a friend by the group, or it may be a gift for the minister who is their friend also. Another plan will include having each child "sign" a Christmas card to be sent to the pastor or to another department or to a shut-in or sick "grandmother friend" whom all the children know. From activities like these stories and conversation about giving, about playing Santa Claus, and about the fun of Christmas secrets may be developed.

There are only a few Bible stories that are suitable for little children (see page 167). The Christmas story is one that three-year-old children love and may wish to hear repeated many times. It may be told over and over again on one Sunday. It may be requested and so repeated for several weeks in succession.

Even after Christmas the children may frequently ask, "Tell me again about when Jesus was a baby." The leader will wish to reread the Christmas story in Luke 1:26-56; 2:1-20. She will probably use as many new translations as possible, for comparison and new insights. She may wish also to read the story as told in Matthew 1:18 to 2:11. Both of these include much fuller accounts than we would plan to give to little children. Just the ideas that Mary cared for Jesus and that Christmas is His birthday should be used. The suggested readings are intended for the leader's own recall of the beauty of the story.

There is a danger of overstimulation during the month. The children may go on shopping excursions to see Santa Claus, or to Christmas parties. In addition, there is an excitement in the preparations for Christmas in the home. These Christmas preparations sometimes interfere with the routine schedules of the children. There may be overindulgence in eating sweets.

This departure from the regular quiet routine that is so necessary for the nursery child is likely to be the underlying cause for colds or sore throats. The nursery class leaders must be alert to these dangers. If there is any reason to think that a child has a cold, he should not be permitted to attend the group. There is a danger of infecting other children and also the danger of being infected by some other child who has no physical signs of illness but who carries germs of a contagious character. Children's diseases develop quickly. The nursery leader in co-operation with the parents will try to safeguard the children (see page 174).

Santa Claus may enter into much of the conversation. There will probably be a tendency to tell "I am going to get ____" This is not an evidence of extreme selfishness on the part of the little child. It is the natural interest of the three-year-old and also the reaction that may be expected when adults ask him many times, "What is Santa Claus going to bring you for Christmas?" Some persons believe that the child must recognize this experience of anticipation and the joy of getting what he expected, to enter fully into the joy of giving.

One or more of the children may bring a copy of the book *The Night Before Christmas*. There may be the request over and over again "Tell it to me." If this happens, the leader will "tell it." The story is quite sure to bring out reports of trips

downtown, visits to see Santa Claus. If there are more than two or three children listening to the stories there is danger that they will become excited and overstimulated as their recital progresses. This is one reason why the leader encourages the children to play alone or in very small groups during the month.

There should be a definite amount in the church budget for the purchase of new equipment and toys for the nursery class. Frequently the nursery class leader wishes that this amount might be supplemented, when she needs new toys, for example, more blocks, a doll buggy, some of the approved nursery class toys available from commercial manufacturers, or a very nice doll or wagon. Parents are usually glad to co-operate in helping to supply one toy a year if the leader explains the need and the purpose of the toy and provides a certain time for purchasing it. In several nursery classes, the leader has developed a plan for either the first or second Sunday in December. She may send a post card to the parents of each child the week preceding that Sunday. The card will explain exactly what piece of equipment is needed and may ask the parents if they wish to make a small Christmas gift to the nursery class for use in the purchase of this toy. The card may state that there will be a box on the piano or table or wherever the leader decides to place it, and that the parents may put their contribution, not to exceed twenty-five cents in the box. It is well to set this limit so that it will not seem a burden on any parent. One advantage in this plan is that the parents have a feeling of pride and personal ownership in the toy that is secured. They have helped to equip the nursery class in which their child is a happy member.

First Sunday

GETTING READY FOR THE SESSION

The room will be arranged as usual with special emphasis on doll play. The doll clothes should be washed and ironed and possibly the dolls scrubbed so that they will invite the children to use them. The picture "Mother's Christmas Story" may be mounted and ready for use. Other pictures that show mother care or Madonna pictures may be selected.

WHEN THE CHILDREN COME

The children should be encouraged to remove their own wraps and given a choice of activity as usual. The leader and assistants will be alert to all that happens but they will not interfere so long as individuals or groups of two or three children play happily without becoming excited. The adults will remain in the background. Anyone of them will be ready to talk with any child who wishes. She will be ready to enter the play experiences as needed, but will never force herself upon a child or a group.

Introduce first to one group or one child and then to another the thought of the care mother takes of the tiny baby in the home. Some child may tell of the baby shoe that mother has "that I wore when I was a little tiny teeny baby" or there may be a discussion of the way mother cares for a younger brother or sister. If the opportunity is provided with these individuals or with small groups, the leader may tell "Mother's Christmas Story" (*My Book, Part I*). It may be that the leader will have no story today, but may encourage the children to play with the dolls and sing them to sleep. The pianist may play softly "Little Baby Jesus" (see page 218) as the children are occupied with various activities. There may be an opportunity as the leader talks with the individual children or with small groups for her to sing "Little Baby Jesus."

Perhaps after she has talked about mother's care, the leader may say "Thank you, God, for mother who takes such good care of us" or "Thank you, God, for mother. Thank you for little babies. Amen."

The music of "Away in a Manger" or "Silent Night" may be played softly. Frequently nursery children recognize these carols because mother sings them at home. They will never be taught in the nursery class of course, neither will any child be asked to sing one of these hymns for the group. However, if a child has heard mother sing a carol at home and, as he plays around, he sings it to himself, the leader may join with him or she may say "Do your mother and you sing that beautiful Christmas carol together at home?" She is always interested in such reactions from the child, but she will never exploit him by requesting him to sing for the group. There is too serious

a risk of centering the attention of the group upon one child. If a child asks to sing one of these Christmas carols when several of the children are singing the nursery songs together, it may be suggested that he wait until the group has finished. Then he may "teach" the carol to the leader or may sing it for the pianist. This should be accepted as a friendly gesture on the part of the child.

Speak of the fun of birthdays. "Christmas is the birthday of Jesus. We have such happy times on Jesus' birthday. We give gifts to others. We have surprises. Sometimes we have a present for daddy or for mother. We hide it away until Christmas morning and then give it as a surprise." The children will probably tell of the tie that they have for daddy or of the gloves that they have for mother. Let them tell but help them to realize so far as possible that surprises are nicest when we do not tell them until the very day that they are to happen. So be sure not to tell mother about her surprise until Christmas morning and be careful not to tell daddy about his surprise tie until Christmas morning.

This conversation will lead naturally into the planning of a surprise for the sexton or the leader may suggest that it would be nice to send a surprise Christmas card to the minister (or to some other department of the church school or to a shut-in).

She may have the card ready and let each child "sign" his name on the back of it.

One leader has used a Christmas card of the "Gran Duca Madonna" as the greeting for the minister each year. This is a favorite Madonna of the nursery class children. Each child should be encouraged to make his mark on the back or inside of the card. The picture will not be defaced, but a friendly minister can interpret these marks to be names of the children. The leader may then write "Christmas Greetings from the Nursery Class." No child should be urged to sign his name against his will. Occasionally there is a child whose efforts to write have met with ridicule at home. Such a child may say "I can't write." But most of the children will consider this activity great fun and the appreciative adult who receives the card will not think the writing is mere scribbling.

There is often a request from the nursery class children for the song "Jingle Bells." The leader may let two or three of

the children sing this if they wish. A small group near the piano may be interested in ringing bells in time with the pianist who is playing some of the Christmas carols. She will include the nursery song "Little Baby Jesus." The small bells used for decorations on Christmas packages may be purchased at the ten-cent store. These bells come in several sizes, with from three to six attached to a card. The leader will select those that tune together well. They may be strung separately on cords. A song that lends itself to the use of the bells is "Merry Christmas" sung to the tune of "Happy Birthday to You." The children should be encouraged to jingle their bells in time with the piano. This may afford another opportunity for a prayer of thanks for friends who work and play together or for happy times when Christmas surprises are planned.

Second Sunday

GETTING READY FOR THE SESSION

On this Sunday it will be well to bring the package that is to be wrapped for the sexton. Children have no sense of money values. They cannot buy what they give to others, but there will be a feeling of the gift being their own if they help to plan for it and wrap the surprise for another person. There will be the gift, the wrapping paper, and plenty of seals so that as many children as wish to do so may place a seal on the package.

It will also be well to have the Christmas tree that is to be trimmed on hand. The leader will make special preparation for this tree. It is suggested that there be at least two or three small trees rather than one large tree for the children to decorate. The fifteen to eighteen inch artificial trees are quite satisfactory for use in the nursery class. However, if the leader is able to get two or three small live Christmas trees, she may put them in flower pots so that they will stand firmly.

For the trimmings, gummed seals in the shape of bells may be fastened together on silver ribbon or on red or green ribbon. There may be one pair of seals near each end of a quarter yard length of ribbon. This can be hung over the tree and makes an attractive decoration. Popcorn and cranberries may be

strung. Small geometric figures may be cut from gilt and silver paper that has been mounted on cardboard. These may be hung on the tree also. The tinsel or silver rain may then be placed on it.

All of the trimmings should be put on by the children themselves. This is a Christmas tree for the children trimmed by the children.

No glass balls should be used on the tree. There is danger of the ball being dropped and broken. In picking up a fragment the child may cut his finger.

WHEN THE CHILDREN COME

The pianist may play familiar Christmas carols or the song "Little Baby Jesus" or "Christmas Morning" as the children arrive. If the trees are placed around the room where the children can see them, there is no question but that this activity will claim the attention of every child.

Encourage the children to place the trimmings as they wish. The leader will not suggest where each piece should be placed, but may ask a child who is shy, "Where do you think it would look better?"

After the trees are decorated, the children may wish to remove all of the trimmings immediately just for the fun of taking them all off and putting them back again. Perhaps small groups of three or four children may gather around each of the trees and listen as the leaders sing "Little Baby Jesus." A few of the children may know the song and be able to sing it with the adults. There may be a prayer time. "Thank you, God, for happy times at Christmas" or "We have such happy times on Jesus' birthday. Thank you, God, for Christmas" are suggested as prayers.

If a story is needed, the leader will decide whether she wishes to tell "Merry Christmas" or "Christmas Morning" (see *My Book for Fall*, Part I). The pictures on the screen or dado should include those of children and adults wrapping and tying Christmas gifts or trimming the Christmas tree. Many pictures are available in current magazines at this time of year. "Christmas Morning" or "Little Baby Jesus" may be sung.

Nursery children love repetition. The Christmas story may

be repeated each Sunday this month and will be welcomed every time it is told.

The outstanding interest on this Sunday may have been trimming the tree or it may have been wrapping the gift or further interest in doll play and the care of the mother for her little baby. The leader will be guided by the children. Some may play with the dolls. Others may request the story about the baby Jesus. Just a few may be interested in wrapping the gift. Probably all will wish to help trim the trees as this is a most popular activity. A few may wish to jingle the bells and sing Christmas carols. As usual, the leader and assistants will co-operate and fit into the need of the child or of the small group.

Third Sunday

GETTING READY FOR THE SESSION

When this is the Sunday before Christmas, the leader will probably wish to center activities around the "Gran Duca Madonna" (see the third cover page of *My Book for Fall, Part I*) and the accompanying story in the book. The leader will arrange with the minister or sexton to come into the group at a certain time during the session.

WHEN THE CHILDREN COME

As the children come into the nursery class they should be encouraged to remove their wraps and to discuss with the leaders any special interests of the week. These will probably include Christmas preparations. "Away in a Manger" (Music, "Müeller," see *The Methodist Hymnal*) may be sung to the children and they may enjoy singing "Little Baby Jesus." They may wish also to play the bells.

If the gift was wrapped for the sexton or minister last week, he should be invited into the group and the gift presented to him. The leader and children will talk over informally how they will present the gift.

The arrangements may have been made for the sexton to be invited into the group during the morning so that all the children may see him. They may sing "Little Baby Jesus" for

him. They may ring the bells. Perhaps, some child will be willing to hand him the Christmas gift. They may all plan to say "Merry Christmas, Merry Christmas" as the gift is presented. If it is not possible for him to come into the group, those who wish to do so may carry the gift to him. One leader will go with this group of children. The rest of the children will remain in the nursery class and will follow their own interests.

Use every available opportunity to refer to Christmas day as the birthday of Jesus and a time for making mother and daddy and other persons happy. We say "Merry Christmas" to our friends. "Merry Christmas, mother," "Merry Christmas, daddy." Perhaps some of the group will wish to play house together and to say "Merry Christmas" to one another as they say it on Christmas morning. "Christmas Morning" may be sung.

Individual play should be encouraged. It is likely that the children will wish to trim the trees again.

If the weather is mild and it seems advisable to do so, it might be possible to plan a Christmas party for the birds. Bread crumbs and suet could be scattered on the ground for them or if there is a small evergreen tree in the church yard, it might be possible to tie a few pieces of suet and a slice or two of bread on some of the lower branches. Nursery children cannot tie strings to the tree so it will not be an activity which is entirely their own. The leader will have to tie the strings for them. For this reason it seems wiser to suggest that the crumbs be scattered on the ground.

The leader will select those activities which best meet the needs of the children. Probably no one will attempt all that is suggested for this session. One assistant might take two or three of the children to find the sexton and present the gift or, if he comes into the room, he may come when only a few are there. Another assistant could go with two or three of the children whose special interest in feeding birds would warrant the use of this activity. Another group might sing and jingle the bells at the piano with the pianist. Throughout the session the leader will seek to safeguard the children from overstimulation and as usual she will encourage them to put away the toys and to begin to put on their own wraps before the arrival of the parents.

Fourth Sunday

GETTING READY FOR THE SESSION

(If Christmas happens to fall on the fourth Sunday in December or if this Sunday precedes Christmas, these suggested procedures should be transferred to the first Sunday in January and some of the activities that were not used on the other Sundays of the month may be used on this last Sunday in December.)

WHEN THE CHILDREN COME

There is likely to be some excitement on the Sunday following Christmas. The children will be eager to tell what Santa Claus brought them and to tell about their Christmas tree and the good times they had. If there is snow on the ground this Sunday, the leader may guide the conversation to the fun the children have in the snow and to the experiences with the snow, but in most cases it will probably be better to center the attention on Christmas gifts, toys, the right use of toys, the need for taking turns with them.

If a story is told, "Taking Turns" may be the one used or there may be a request for the retelling of one of the Christmas stories. The songs may also be an outgrowth of experiences. The Christmas songs may be used or "Taking Turns" or "Snow" or "Snowman."

There should be opportunity for discussion of the happy times that the children have had in the nursery class during the month. They may wish to untrim and retrim the Christmas trees again.

If there has been any Christmas gift to the department such as new dolls or doll carriage or blocks, it may be necessary to remind the children again that the toys belong to all of the children, to Helen and Ted and Marjory and Sally and Tom and that all the children take turns using the new Christmas gift.

It may be that some of the children have brought a new toy from home to share with the other children today. Encourage careful use of the toy. The leader will be sure to admire any new snowsuits or coats or leggings or gloves or purses that were Christmas gifts.

JANUARY

POSSIBLE MATERIALS AND ACTIVITIES:

Possible stories for January (select from these stories in *My Book for Winter, Part II*): "Playing Indoors," "Fun in the Snow," "Doing Dishes," "My Doctor," "I Take Off My Wraps," "Billie's Pigeons."

Possible songs for January (see pages 216-223): "The Church Bells," "Snow," "The Snowman," "Taking Turns."

Possible activities for January: Sharing toys. Feeding the birds. Playing in the snow. Making a game of taking off wraps.

Introduction

IT IS likely that there will be new children in the group this month. These new children need to become acquainted with the room and equipment and to feel at home in their surroundings. The leader will use the same procedure with them as suggested in October for the other children.

There may be reactions from Christmas and New Year family reunions. Three-year-old children frequently find themselves the center of attention during family reunions. As a result, they wish to continue this sense of importance. The child expects undue attention. He may even revert to behavior on a younger level or withdraw within himself and appear shy and bashful.

At this time of year, there are likely to be epidemics of colds, sore throats, influenza, and contagious diseases. Children may be absent several Sundays because of illness. This is another

reason why it will be necessary for them to relearn the social experience of being one in a group. They should relearn and make adjustments much more quickly than they did as new members of the group. The nursery class leader will wish to keep in close touch with the homes so that she may know of any illness. Whenever possible, she will call to see the child, but if he suffers from a contagious disease she will wish to write notes and telephone the home.

The beginning of the new year is an opportunity for the leader to look critically at the nursery class room and to check on the arrangement of furniture, the need for paint, the need to replace or mend toys. She should make definite plans to work toward the improvements that should be made.

Throughout the month the leader will continue to provide opportunities for the children to take turns and share. There is the practical question of helping the children to share the toys they received at Christmas. The story "Taking Turns" may be repeated frequently and the song may be sung over and over as the children are helped to remember to take turns. Dorothy may bring her new baby doll. She will have a fine lesson in co-operation when she offers to let Madge or Harold or any of the other children play with the doll. The fact that there is only one doll of this kind in the group makes it possible to stress the need for each child to take a turn and to be careful of the new doll that Dorothy has brought to share with them. Practice of such sharing with *satisfaction* establishes a foundation for the development of personal interest in the happiness of others, a worthy religious value.

The retelling of any of the Christmas stories may be requested. The leader will always bear in mind that, although plans are suggested for the month, she will substitute other plans at any time that they meet the needs of the group.

The leader will plan to send notes to the parents early in the month. These notes should enclose strips of paper muslin on which the child's name has been typed. The parents will be requested to fasten these name tags in the new snowsuits or other winter clothing that is sure to appear after Christmas.

The notes should also encourage the parents to read the stories and help the child to enjoy the pictures in *My Book for Winter Part II*. The attention of the parents should be directed

toward the importance of the parents' section (pages 32 to 48). The parents may be asked to bring their suggestions of any ways in which the church school may co-operate more fully with the home plans for the Christian nurture of three-year-old children.

There is ample opportunity for a religious interpretation of several stories. One cannot but be conscious of the religious value in the stories "Fun in the Snow," "Playing Indoors," "My Doctor" and "Billie's Pigeons." All of the stories for January carry a note of security or joy as a member of the family group or the development of self-reliance, or the Christian consideration for others. Much of the value of the stories will be lost unless the leader helps the children to recognize a sense of security in God and places a religious interpretation on home activities. The Christian idea of loving, trustful confidence in others may be strengthened through such teaching. This will not be through spoken words or telling but will be seen in the friendly trustfulness of the person who is guiding the religious development of the children.

Only a beginning in any of these ideas can be made by the nursery child. The leader remembers that the little child is not articulate. It is not natural for him to express in words what he thinks, knows, or feels. She does not expect him to do so, nor does she try to teach ideas through words. Instead she arranges for actual experiences. For example, she does not talk about sharing except as the children play and share together. She never tries to teach Bible verses as such. A Bible verse is a crystallization of a Christian experience. If there has not been ample experience, and no nursery child has had it, the repetition of the Bible verse has no religious value. The nursery child has not the ability to recall in *words* even an important experience. Combinations of words are learned and learned again later on. Songs or poems picked up through hearing must be relearned later. So Bible verses, except as an incidental response in conversation, are never used in nursery class.

The leader will read pages 52 to 62 in this text so that she may have a clear idea of the possible procedures for January. Then she will be able to adapt these procedures for her own group. She will also read the entire pupil's book, *My Book for Winter*,

Part II. She will note the material for parents and will seek ways to supplement these suggestions as she works with the child in nursery class. She will sign the letter to the children on the inside cover page and the letter to the parents on page 33. Plans will be made for distribution of the books. The children who are present on Sunday will receive theirs. The others should be delivered personally or mailed during the week.

Any Sunday that the children have played so hard that they are tired, it will be well to provide a rest space in a protected part of the room. Possibly a sheet may be spread on a rug or a gym mattress. Here the children may rest while listening to music. Five minutes of such relaxation may mean that the children will leave the group relaxed rather than tense and irritable.

First Sunday

GETTING READY FOR THE SESSION

The leader will decide whether she wishes to stress the fun of playing in the snow or of playing indoors in cold or stormy weather. After she has decided on the emphasis, she will take apart one of the books and carefully mount the picture for use on the screen or dado. Many teachers prefer to mount all of the pictures at one time, the cover picture, the Bible picture on the third cover page and the picture for each of the stories in the quarter. These may be filed in the picture file and used throughout the quarter. They may also become part of the reserved picture file for future use.

If there is no snow on the ground the first Sunday in January, the picture, story, and the suggested activities about play in the snow should be kept for a snowy Sunday. If the leader plans to use the snow activities, she will encourage conversation about warm snowsuits, coats, rubbers, and gloves. As opportunities arise, she will lead the children to express gratitude for happy times in the snow and for warm clothing. "Thank you, God, for snow. We have such fun playing in the snow" or "We are so glad that mother and daddy can give us warm coats and gloves. We like to play outdoors in the snow" may

be prayers used during this session, or, if the emphasis is on playing indoors, the leader may offer the prayer "Thank you, God, for warm homes. We like to play at home."

Conversation may include descriptions of snowmen that older brothers and sisters have made. There may be reports of rides on sleds, tumbles in the snow or the fun of digging paths. The song "Snowman" (see page 223) may be enjoyed.

WHEN THE CHILDREN COME

As the leader helps with snaps or snug fitting suits, she may speak of the warm wraps and of the mothers and daddies who care for the boys and girls and keep them warm when they go outdoors. It is quite likely that the children will mention their rubbers or galoshes that they wear in the snow and that new mittens will be exhibited for approval.

The pianist may play "Snow" as the children play around the room. There will be the usual informal groups near the interest centers. If any of the children go to the piano, the leader or the pianist may sing the song with them. It may be that the children will request one of the Christmas songs.

There may be informal play and a happy time together, or some of the children may ask to play snowman. If a story is told, the leader will decide whether she wishes to use "Fun in the Snow," "Playing Indoors" or the story from the previous week "Taking Turns." Perhaps, there will be no new story this Sunday but just a happy talking together about fun with their toys or fun of playing in the snow or the fun of helping to care for the birds. There may be reports on New Year family parties. There will probably be the request for the Christmas songs or for the repetition of one of the Christmas stories.

Try to stress the idea of being careful with the toys. It is fine to have all the girls and boys take turns playing with the toys, but, when they have finished playing, they must be big enough to remember to put them away. The pages of picture books are turned carefully. The doll carriage, wagons, toy truck, balls and other playthings should be taken in the house or on the porch when the children come in from play. This is the way girls and boys help mother. They pick up their

own blocks and put away the doll clothes and gather up the books. The leader will continue to stress this idea of care of toys throughout the month. It will help if she plans to give special attention to putting away toys in the nursery class. The children should have carried the toys back to the particular interest center from which they took them, but, perhaps, they can now begin to share the responsibility for putting them in the closet or toy chest at the end of the session.

Encourage conversation about taking turns when they play outdoors with the sled at home and the fun of taking turns when they help to set the table (or any other small responsibility that may be delegated to a three-year-old). If the story "Playing Indoors" is used today, these suggestions will fit in nicely as the leader speaks of the way girls and boys help mother in the home after they have played together and before it is time to go to bed.

Be sure to call attention to the new books when the parents or other adults come for the children. Show pages 32 to 48 and request the parents to read these pages carefully.

Second Sunday

GETTING READY FOR THE SESSION

As usual the plans for this Sunday should be flexible. If the leader did not use the snow story on the first Sunday in January, there may be snow today. She will follow the suggested plans for snow emphasis. Otherwise, she may wish to use the story "Doing Dishes" or "Playing Indoors."

WHEN THE CHILDREN COME

The room will be arranged as on the preceding Sunday. The children will be greeted and encouraged to remove their wraps. Then they may be offered a choice of activity. Pictures of children helping around the home should be mounted and placed on the picture screen or dado. The leader may have an opportunity during the week to discover whether any of the children in the group really have the fun of helping with the dishes at home. Perhaps she will plan to give each child a note. These may be written on colored paper to make them more

attractive to the children. The note might say: "Dear Mother: I would like to help you dry the dishes" or "I would like to help you dry the silver when you do the dishes." This note may be given to the child to carry to mother or it may be pinned on his coat. Playing "doing dishes" in housekeeping play may be encouraged with small groups of two or three children.

The leader will not attempt to tell the story or carry on the activity with a large group but will confine herself to individuals or to groups of two or three children. It is well to encourage individual play at first. Then the leader may note the interests that the children are following. She may be able to discover why they seem particularly interested in certain play and will plan procedures for the session accordingly.

If there is snow on the ground, the children will enjoy playing snowman again. It may be possible to let them put on their wraps and go outdoors for a few minutes. Call attention to the tracks in the snow, tracks of birds, small animals, footprints, and automobiles may all prove interesting to little children. They will make their own tracks and may step carefully in the footprints of each other. The prayer suggested for the previous Sunday "Thank you, God, for snow. We have such fun playing in the snow" may be repeated today.

If the story and play activities center around the work of the home such as doing dishes, there may be several prayer opportunities. Perhaps the leader will say "Thank you, God, for our homes. We like to help mother at home."

Third Sunday

GETTING READY FOR THE SESSION

In anticipation of the fact that there is sure to be illness sometime during January, it is suggested that pictures of a doctor or nurse be mounted and ready for use for this session. One of these pictures will be from the story "My Doctor" in *My Book for Winter, Part II*. If a story is told on this Sunday, "My Doctor" will probably be the one used.

WHEN THE CHILDREN COME

Encourage conversation among the children about their physical checkups. Perhaps some children will be willing to show how they say "Ah" as the doctor looks down their throats. The doll corner may hold the interest of several of the children as they play that the doll is sick and the doctor must come to see it.

It may be that the story will not be told at all, but, if possible, the idea of the doctor friend should be introduced and the children should be led to realize that they may help the doctor when they do just as he tells them.

In one group during a discussion about the doctor, a three-and-a-half-year-old boy said, "When you are sick, God makes you well but the doctor helps." The pianist will have selected music that she wishes to use for this Sunday. The song "Snow" may be sung, substituting the word "doctor."

Many prayer opportunities will arise during the discussion especially if the story is told to small groups of two or three children and not to the group as a whole. "Thank you, God, for our doctor friend who helps us to keep well" or "Thank you, God, for mothers and fathers who help us to keep well and for the doctor who helps us too" are suggested prayers.

The doctor pictures, story, and play may help to prepare the children for a common but often dreaded experience. Most children accept the physical checkup of the doctor and may have learned to anticipate it with pleasure, but stressing interest in the doctor friend will be a worth-while plan if the children gain confidence from it.

Doll play, rolling the ball, perhaps the game of snowman will prove interesting for the children this Sunday. If a rest period is needed, it will be a short one. The leader may sing softly "Time to get up. Time to get up" running the scale as a signal for the end of the rest time.

Fourth Sunday

GETTING READY FOR THE SESSION

If the leader decides that the children may feed the birds this Sunday, she will take bread crumbs for them to put outside.

Pictures of children putting on or taking off wraps or hanging them up may be placed on the screen.

WHEN THE CHILDREN COME

The children should be observed carefully as they come into the group. There will be the usual encouragement for self-help in removal of wraps. The leader may speak of how nicely Jerry took off his new snowsuit or how carefully Douglas put his new gloves in his coat pocket. This will be done without exploitation of any of the children, but will encourage all of those who have made an effort to care for their wraps.

Pictures of children putting on or taking off wraps, or hanging them up may be placed on the screen for this Sunday. Perhaps some of the children will go to the picture screen as soon as their wraps are removed. If so, this will be an opportunity for the leader to tell the story "I Take Off My Wraps." Then she may mention the care with which that particular child has taken off or hung his wraps.

At an appropriate time during the session, the leader may invite those children who wish to do so to put on their own wraps and go out in the yard to put out the bread crumbs for the birds. One city church had no available space for the children to go outdoors to feed the birds, but many pigeons flew around the church and the leader arranged a small feeding board outside the nursery class window. The children placed small bits of bread on this board and were delighted to see one pigeon fly down to eat during the session. On the following Sunday when all of the crumbs were gone, the children were certain that the birds had enjoyed the bread.

After the children have returned to the room, they will be encouraged to take off their wraps. Perhaps, the leader may tell the story "I Take Off My Wraps" to groups of two or three children as they manage their own wraps. It will be necessary to help with the difficult snaps and the removal of leggings over the heels of the shoes, but even the youngest children should be able to place their wraps on the hangers and put the hangers on the low hooks or rod. "We are so glad for big girls and boys who can care for their own wraps. Thank you, God, for our big girls and boys" or "Thank you, God, for

girls and boys who can learn to take care of their own wraps" may be a prayer suggestion for this session. Perhaps the leader will find an opportunity for a brief prayer while the children are outdoors feeding the birds. "We are glad to help take care of the birds. Thank you, God, for birds" might be the prayer used outdoors.

Now they may be encouraged to play the "Get Acquainted Game" (see page 199) or "Getting Ready for Nursery Class" or "Snowman." If the leader wishes, she may prepare a note for the children to take home that says: "Dear Mother: Please help me to take off my own wraps like the little girls in the story in *My Book for Winter*, Part II, page 10."

Fifth Sunday

GETTING READY FOR THE SESSION

The room will be arranged as usual and the same general procedures may be planned. The leader will be alert to any special needs of the children who have been away because of illness.

During the week the leader may purchase wild bird seed. This is inexpensive and may be secured at feed or pet stores. A spoonful in a quarter of a paper napkin tied with colored floss will make a little package that may be carried home. There should be an extra supply of this seed to feed the birds during the session.

WHEN THE CHILDREN COME

After the children have followed their own interests in play, the leader may introduce the thought to individuals or to small groups about God's care for the birds in winter. She may encourage conversation about the fun of watching the birds. Pictures of birds and of children scattering crumbs may be placed on the picture screen. If it is practical for the children to go outdoors again this Sunday, they should be encouraged to put on their own wraps and go out to scatter some of the bird seed or bread. "We are glad that we can help to care for the birds. Thank you, God, for birds" may be the prayer again this Sunday.

When the children return to their room they should be encouraged to remove their own wraps and hang them up. The little packages of bird seed may be shown with the explanation that each child will have a package to take home so that he may feed the birds in his own yard.

The leaders will constantly remember that they wish to help the children to take turns with the toys and to put away the toys after they have finished with them. The leader may make up a story about any of the equipment the children use in nursery class with which they must take turns. It is just as important to learn to take turns with a ball or a doll or with blocks as with any piece of equipment that might be mentioned in a story.

If there happens to be snow falling today and the children cannot go outdoors to feed the birds, the seed may be given them just the same. The children may watch the snow from the window and perhaps as they watch the leader may say "It makes us happy to see the snow. We like to play in the snow. Thank you, God, for snow." They may sing "Snow." Again the "Get Acquainted Game" and "Getting Ready for Nursery Class" and "Snowman" may be games that are played.

FEBRUARY

POSSIBLE MATERIALS AND ACTIVITIES:

Possible stories for February (select from these stories in *My Book for Winter*, Part II): "My Policeman Friend," "Susan's Valentine," "Ronnie's Breakfast," "I Like the Dark," "Caring for the Baby Jesus."

Possible songs for February (see pages 216-223): "The Church Bells," "Snow," "Taking Turns," "When I'm Very Happy."

Possible activities for February: Playing snowman. Ring Rosy. Playing house. Plans to make valentine for mother, father, possibly other friends.

Introduction

THE MONTH of February will present added opportunities to enjoy winter fun. Some of the teaching emphases for January may carry on through this month. The idea of assuming responsibility for one's own wraps and for putting away toys should continue during February. If the leader wishes to repeat one of the Christmas stories or if the children request it, it will be all right to use that story on any Sunday.

The leader may wish to use the story "Caring for the Baby Jesus" (see *My Book for Winter*, Part II, page 26 and third cover page). However, the leader will remember that religious teaching for little children does not consist of telling Bible stories, but in the little everyday acts of thoughtful courtesy, and

When the first of February comes on Sunday in a leap year, February will have five Sundays. In this case the plan for the fifth Sunday in January may be used on the first Sunday in February.

in the practice of such consideration for others as taking turns, or sharing. If the children discover ways of helping mother and do cheerfully the tasks that mother or father requests in the home, these may be a nursery child's expression of Christian living. The nursery class leader will be alert for all such teaching opportunities. She will fail in her responsibility as a leader of three-year-old children in the church school unless she interprets religiously all of the experiences that they enjoy together in the nursery class. The leader will reread the story for the children and the message to the parents in *My Book*, Part II, and will decide which of the stories she will plan to use this month.

If forsythia buds are advanced, the leader will wish to use suggestions for enjoyment of this "surprise" during February (see page 78 and page 79). When forsythia does not bloom until April, the plan may be used as suggested in March.

The first two Sundays of the month provide opportunities for work on valentines. When older brothers and sisters have talked about valentines at home, the children will be eager to enter into this fun. Children who have not heard of valentines will be delighted to know that they may make pictures to send to mother and daddy or to other friends. The leader will remember that little children lack muscular co-ordination. For this reason she will plan to use materials that can be handled easily by them. There should be nothing that will require mounting, pasting, or detail work. No scissors should be used. Probably the best materials for the use of nursery children will be small lace paper doilies that may be purchased in the five-and ten-cent store. A gummed valentine seal may be placed in the middle of the doily. The cardboard heart-shaped cutouts may be used in place of the doilies and a gummed seal added. A moist sponge or a piece of cotton will provide for moistening the seals. The leader should have envelopes on which she may write the name "Frances' mother" or "Jack's daddy" so that the child may put his valentine inside the envelope and carry it home.

Frequently nursery leaders find that efforts to help the children to become independent are hampered by parents who do not realize that their devotion to their children is not measured by how much they do for them but by how much they help

the children to do for themselves. The leader may need to encourage the mothers to permit the children to take off their own wraps and hang them up for themselves. Sometimes the leader can arrange to be near the door. As she greets the parent and child, she may suggest to the child that he say goodby to mother and remove his own wraps and hang them up for himself. This plan may be especially necessary if the children have been ill, for many parents use illness as an excuse to let the children lapse back into dependency upon them.

First Sunday

GETTING READY FOR THE SESSION

If the leader decides to use the story of the policeman, she will have mounted pictures of policemen ready for use. It may be possible to invite a friendly member of the police force who understands little children to come into the group. Ask him to wear his uniform. Arrangements for such a visit may be made through the local police department. It is well to have a clear understanding with the policeman about what will be expected of this visit. It should be explained to him that the leader hopes to establish a feeling of confidence in the policeman as a friend who helps the children to cross the street and helps daddy to drive the car on crowded streets; that sometimes the policeman sees a little girl or boy walking alone and may say "Hello, little boy. What is your name?" If the little boy does not know where he lives, the policeman may help him to find the way home.

WHEN THE CHILDREN COME

After the children have followed their own interests for a few minutes, the leader may tell the story, "My Policeman Friend," to small groups. Several of the children may have been interested in any policeman pictures that the leader had ready for use.

If there is a policeman on the corner near the church or if the leader knows that the child has to pass a policeman on the way to church school, it may be that there will be interest in talking about this experience. Some child may speak of the

policeman as "catching people." In this case the leader may skillfully lead the child to realize that the policeman is a friend who likes to help.

If the policeman comes into the group he may show the children his whistle just as the policeman in the story showed the whistle. The leader should confer with the policeman beforehand so there will be no danger of his offering to let any of the children blow his whistle. This is a health precaution. We teach the children that toys are not to be put in the mouth and articles that do go in one person's mouth are not to be passed to another person. This rule should be as strictly enforced with the policeman's whistle as with any other object.

If no policeman can come into the group, but the children can see one directing traffic, they may stand at the window and watch him or may put on their wraps and go out near the curb provided there is not too much traffic and that there are enough leaders to care for the children adequately.

After the policeman has gone, the children may wish to play policeman. Two lines may be drawn with chalk or string may be laid to represent a street crossing. One of the children may play he is the policeman and direct traffic as the other children cross the street. Or two or three children may play with the small automobiles and one may be policeman and tell them when the cars may go and when they must stop. The children will probably find their own way of playing. It would not be like the adult's understanding of policeman play but will be a very satisfying and a learning experience for the children. "Thank you, God, for policeman friends" or "We are glad the policemen friends help to take care of us. Thank you, God, for policemen friends" may be the prayer that is offered during the session.

After this activity, the leader may have material for making the valentines spread on the table ready for the children. The leader should plan that this activity should not last too long and it should be followed by some more active games. If there is snow either this Sunday or any Sunday during the month, the leader may speak of the snow as a warm covering for the grass and flowers. It feels cold but it keeps the cold winds away from the ground. Some of the children may speak of snowdrifts. If so, they may mention the helpers who dig snow

paths, the tractor or engine with a snowplow in front that pushes snow away so that the roads will be clear or the trains can go through. Introduce into the conversation particular experiences with which the child is familiar. Not all of the children will have the experiences that would warrant their talking about all these implements for clearing the snow. In parts of the country where there is no snow, the leader will omit all reference to it, but she may plan to have the children feed the birds just the same. There will be the emphasis on happy times indoors and outdoors in the winter time. The songs "When I'm Very Happy," "Snow, Snow, Snow" (with the probable substitution of "friends" or "postmen" for the word "snow") and "Taking Turns" may be used during the session.

Second Sunday

GETTING READY FOR THE SESSION

Materials for their continued work on valentines should be available. These may be placed on the table where the children can see them as soon as they arrive.

Pictures of postmen delivering mail may be mounted for the children's use. These may be placed on the picture screen or dado or may be pasted into a book that the children can enjoy, or the separate pictures may be mounted and placed on the table for the children to examine or carry around as they wish. If a story is told, "Susan's Valentine" (*My Book for Winter, Part II*) will probably be used.

WHEN THE CHILDREN COME

Since this is the Sunday before Valentine Day, it may be that the children will remember that they made valentines on the preceding Sunday and will mention this and wish to continue this activity the first thing after they have taken off their wraps. Perhaps they may sing "Snow" substituting the word "friends" as they make valentines. They may plan to make some extra valentines for grandmother or an older brother or sister or the baby and perhaps one for the minister or a shut-in or another department of the church.

Most of the children will probably be interested in making a valentine to take home to mother. If any of them show no interest, they should not be urged to make one. During the making of the valentines there should be enough gummed seals on each of several small tables so that the two or three children who work at each table may select the design they wish. If they request more than one seal, there should be enough available for them to make mother's valentine the way they desire it. The leaders will remind themselves that all the work that is done must be simple. No intricate or difficult work should be planned. The finished product is not the valuable experience from the making of the valentine. It is rather the fact that the child does something himself with the definite plan that it is to be given to someone else.

If there should happen to be a child in the group who says "I am making this valentine for myself," the leader may suggest that we usually make valentines to send to other persons. A valentine says "I love you" to the person to whom it is sent. A valentine that they give to mother will tell mother "I love you." The valentine that is given to the minister will say to him "I love you." The leader might suggest to the child who wants the valentine for himself that he take it home and decide later to whom he should give it. The valentine is his. If he chooses to keep it instead of giving it away, let him do so.

While they are working, each group will talk informally or sing. Perhaps the leader may say, "We are glad, God, that we may make valentines to say 'I love you' to mother." The song "When I'm Very Happy" would be appropriate and "Taking Turns" may be used while the children wait turns to use the sponge or to have the name written on the envelope.

After work on the valentine is finished, the children should clear up any bits of paper and seals and put them in a designated place. The cleaning up after such an activity and putting away toys after play are important practices for nursery age children.

By this time of the year putting away toys should be a natural procedure. It is one of the ways in which the children may help mother at home and should always be expected in the nursery class before the children go home.

The activity of making valentines should not continue more

than eight or ten minutes for any child, probably for a shorter time. As soon as they have put away their materials the leader should plan for small groups to play some more active games such as "Ring Rosy," "Snowman," or "Follow the Leader." Or the children may skip to music. This will bring into play the larger muscles and will be restful after the quiet time of making valentines. The leader may wish to have an inexpensive valentine ready to give each child before he goes home, or she may use this opportunity for sending a valentine greeting to the child through the mail. If so, she will plan to mail them so that the child will receive the valentine on time.

The leader may encourage conversation among the children about the postman coming to their homes and the letters that he brings. Perhaps small groups of two or three may wish to play house again this Sunday. One child may play he is postman and hand valentines to the other children. These may be collected and handed out again as long as the children wish to continue the play.

Third Sunday

GETTING READY FOR THE SESSION

If the leader plans to provide an opportunity for the children to feed the birds, she will take the bread crumbs or seed.

If there is to be a visit to the furnace room, the leader will arrange with the janitor before the session. He should be told at what time the visit is likely to be made so that he will be sure to be there. He should also be advised what to show, such as the great pile of coal and the rows of ashcans if coal is used, or the big boiler and the pipes that lead out to the nursery class room.

WHEN THE CHILDREN COME

The room will be arranged as usual. In the doll corner a small table may be set up as an invitation to play tea party. If the leader decides to use the story, "Ronnie's Breakfast," this will become a breakfast table. The children may play they are pouring the milk, making the toast, eating the grapefruit. Another group of two or three children may play that they are

having breakfast and "Getting Ready for Nursery Class" with the substitution of the words related to breakfast, as "This is the way we pour the milk. This is the way we drink our milk. This is the way we make the toast" or "eat our orange" or whatever is suggested for breakfast.

Perhaps another small group will play house with one of the children or a teacher as the mother who prepares the breakfast. The children and mother may talk together about their good breakfast. Any of these activities will probably lead to a conversation of what the child had for breakfast.

If the weather is pleasant, the children may put on their wraps and go outdoors for a walk or to play "Follow the Leader" or to climb up and down the church steps for a few minutes. This provides another opportunity for the children to put on and take off their wraps and hang them up for themselves. Some of the children may ask to feed the birds. If so, the leader will have feed ready for them to place outdoors as they have done on previous Sundays. If a game is made of the wraps and they do it for the purpose of going out together for a few minutes, this will be a sufficiently interesting incentive so that most of the children will be eager to show that they can manage their own wraps without help.

Before the visit to the furnace room, the children may sit near the radiator long enough to feel its warmth. Conversation may be carried on with individuals or in small groups about the nice warm room and the friend who comes to church early to tend to the furnace. This will be a simple explanation for those children who have watched parents tend the furnace. It may be a totally new situation for children who live in apartments or in houses heated from a central heating plant.

When the children go to the furnace room, they should not be permitted to look into the open door of the furnace. Aside from the physical danger, this might be a terrifying experience. Encourage conversation with the janitor. The leader will be sure to thank him for permitting the group to visit the furnace room. If possible the children may be led in prayer while there, otherwise the prayer may come after they have returned to their own room. "Thank you, God, for friends at church. We are glad our friend _____ gets our room warm for us."

The song "Friends at Church" may be sung and the dis-

cussion may lead to the fact that the children have friends with whom they "sing and play" and also have other friends at church. There are the friends who are the teachers. There is a friend —, the janitor, who keeps the room warm.

If practical, the leader may ask the children whether they would like to take a surprise package to — next Sunday (the leader may decide to make a box of homemade candy or cookies or to take a tumbler of jelly or some other inexpensive gift for the children to carry to the janitor on the following Sunday).

If there is a rest time, it will be over and the children will have put on their wraps before the parents come for them. If they manage their wraps, commend those who were able to take off and hang up their wraps or to put the wraps on by themselves. Encourage them as being big girls and boys who are better able to help mother at home when they can do these things for themselves. The leader will be careful that she never compares one child's ability with that of another child. She *may* say, "Melvin and June and Faith took off their hats. They took off their coats. They hung them up, *all by themselves.*"

Fourth Sunday

GETTING READY FOR THE SESSION

If the story "Caring for the Baby Jesus" is used on this Sunday, the leader will plan to use the story "I Like the Dark" on some future Sunday as the story "I Like the Dark" is definitely planned to help establish security in children who fear the dark. This is one emphasis in this year's experience that should not be neglected.

Unfortunately in some churches it is necessary for the children to pass through a dark hallway or entrance before they reach the nursery class room. Such an experience may frighten a child or may set up a fear that he cannot explain, yet it makes him hesitant about coming to the nursery class. He may even react so violently that he refuses to co-operate in the nursery class or stages temper tantrums when he is brought by his parents. This gives added emphasis to the need for trying to

understand the underlying reasons for any emotional disturbances of a little child.

If the children must enter the nursery class room through a dark passage or entrance hall, the leader should see that a strong enough bulb is placed in the electric light so that the room will not be terrifying even though it seems dark in comparison with the outdoors.

The leader will be sure to take the gift for the janitor. The picture "I Like the Dark" and any other pictures showing children playing in the dark or going to sleep may be ready for use.

WHEN THE CHILDREN COME

Although the children will be encouraged to follow their own interests, there may be special guidance toward doll play, especially putting their babies to bed.

The story "I Like the Dark" may be told and the children may be encouraged to talk about going to sleep without any light, or watching the moon after they are in bed, or looking out the window with mother or daddy to watch the bright lights twinkle on the streets, or seeing the automobiles flash their lights, or just seeing the dark outdoors. Children who have such happy experiences have an undergirding of security that the leader wishes the other members of the group to develop.

"Thank you, God, for night time when girls and boys may rest" or "We are glad that we can sleep at night. Thank you, God, for the night time and the quiet" may be prayers for this session.

If the leader has provided the surprise for the janitor, the children should have the pleasure of seeing it. They may help to wrap it. Perhaps, several of the children will wish to carry it to him or only one or two may wish to take part in this experience. If it seems better, the leader may plan to invite the janitor into the nursery class room. One of the children may hand him the surprise at that time.

If necessary, there should be the usual opportunity for rest. The children will again put away all toys and put on their wraps with as little help as possible before the parents arrive for them.

M A R C H

POSSIBLE MATERIALS AND ACTIVITIES:

Possible stories for March (select from these stories in *My Book for Winter*, Part II): "Going to Bed," "Helping to Care for Baby Sister," "Finding a Surprise," "I Like the Dark," "Caring for the Baby Jesus."

Possible songs for March (see pages 216-223): "Taking Turns," "When I'm Very Happy," "God's Care," "Little Baby Jesus."

Possible activities for March: Provide nesting materials for birds. Play Ring Rosy. Balloon or kites for wind play. A visit to the sanctuary. Going outdoors to see signs of spring. Enjoying the wind whistling through the window, door or keyhole.

Introduction

IN DIFFERENT parts of the country different possibilities for work with nursery children will be provided during March. In some sections of the country the first part of March brings snow and cold weather. In other regions there will be early spring flowers and nest building. The leader should choose her plans to fit the section of the country in which she works. There is probably no time of year when religious interpretation of the out-of-doors can be given so well. A three-year-old child cannot remember much that happened a year ago. As he sees bare bushes burst into bloom, there may be a truly religious experience. Wonder may grow as buds become tiny leaves and the bare tree changes quickly into a tree with green

foliage. This wonder over life is one of the foundations for worship. "Surprises" may be found in the grass. It is to be expected that after the children have had the story and picture "Finding a Surprise," *My Book for Winter*, Part II, they may refer to the opening of the flowers outdoors as a "surprise." As tulips and jonquils, daffodils and hyacinths add their gay colors, there will be the value and opportunity for the children to name the different colors. From this experience a feeling of gratitude to God may grow. Every opportunity should be used for "seconds of worship" as the leader helps the children to discover blossoming forsythia bushes, gay crocus blossoms, blooming tulips and jonquils. Much pleasure may also be found in the discovery of the first dandelion.

There will be some churches situated in a downtown section of the city or in some other place where there are no flower beds or bushes around the building. It may be possible for the leader of the nursery group in such a church to arrange with a neighbor living near by who would be glad to have the children come to see her garden. Again there may be a florist shop near the church. The children could be taken either to the window where they look in at the flowers or, if arrangements have been made, they may be invited to go into the shop and really see the flowers. A third possibility for the leader in such a church would be to borrow the spring flowers that have been purchased for the church sanctuary for the morning service or to carry a pot of blossoming daffodil or tulip plants into the nursery class with her. None of these suggestions is so valuable as the experience of actually seeing the plants as they grow outdoors.

March winds are the cause for complaint by many adults. In those sections of the country where winds bring disastrous dust storms the leader cannot hope to gain the joyous responses that may be anticipated in the other parts of the country, so she will wish to omit any reference to winds. In other regions where the wind is not a dreaded element, she may help the children to experience the joy of feeling the wind on their faces and seeing some pranks that the wind may play.

Easter will sometimes come during this month. When an early Easter date occurs, the leader will refer to the suggested plans for Easter page 87. She will secure a copy of *My Book*

for Spring, Part III, so that the picture and story suggested for use at the Easter season will be available.

First Sunday

GETTING READY FOR THE SESSION

Throughout the month there will be the same general arrangement of the room, and the children will be encouraged to manage their own wraps.

If the leader decides to use the story "Going to Bed" (*My Book for Winter*, Part II, page 23), she will mount the picture that accompanies this story and will secure also other pictures of children resting or going to bed. If this Sunday is a windy day so that conversation about wind would be meaningful, plans may be developed for enjoying the wind. The leader will need enough balloons for each child in the group to have one (there should be several extras to care for any that break). A ball of heavy string will also be on hand to tie the balloons. A loop should be left in one end of the string to slip over the child's hand. Gas inflated balloons are not recommended. If these get away from the child he is keenly disappointed. The experience of playing with the wind will be just as meaningful if small inexpensive balloons are used. These may be inflated with a bicycle pump or a small hand pump. It will save time if the balloons are ready before the session. They may be hidden until time for the outdoor trip.

WHEN THE CHILDREN COME

After the children have arrived, doll play may be encouraged and there may be conversation about going to bed. The leader will try to make an early bedtime seem desirable to children. Some child may mention putting away toys and other necessary preparations for bed. Perhaps the small groups will wish to play "getting ready for bed" (see "Getting Ready for Nursery Class," page 200).

The leader may speak about the wind blowing at night. Some of the children may tell of hearing the wind through the trees and whistling around the house. The snug comfort of bed may be emphasized. "The wind blew and blew but Bobby

snuggled down in bed, and Mary snuggled down in bed, and Ruth snuggled down in bed, and Tommy snuggled down in bed. They closed their eyes. The wind whistled and whistled and whistled but all the children went to sleep. They slept until the next morning when it was time to come to nursery class." Names of children in the group may be substituted in the story. The leader may suggest that they go near the window or keyhole or open the door, then they may listen to hear the whistle of the wind. They may softly make the sound that the wind made while they were asleep last night and as it whistles around the church today. "Whoo-oo-ooo, Whoo-oo-ooo."

The leader may suggest that they put on their hats and coats and go out to play with the wind. One assistant will be designated to bring the balloons soon after the children have gone out. At first the leader may call their attention to the wind against their faces or the way it snatches caps or blows bits of paper around. This conversation will be carried on by each leader with individuals or with groups of two or three children.

The children may stop in a group as one of the leaders explains, "We have a surprise this morning. Miss _____ is going to bring something out for us to play with." So far as possible, let each child choose the color of his balloon. Speak of the way the wind pulls and tugs at the balloon. The wind may play a joke on some child and carry the balloon away beyond his reach. (The extra ones will be on hand.)

If the leader cannot provide the balloons for the children, she may have small bits of colored paper tied to strings or a piece of material may be fastened to a stick and held up in the air to watch the way the wind blows it. Another plan would be for the leader to secure a few soft downy feathers. She may wish to dye them several colors. If the feathers are used, it may be fun for each of the children to have one to blow around in the nursery class room before they go out. Explain that the wind may carry the feather away but it will be fun to watch it go up and up.

Allow enough time for outdoor play so that the children may experience the real joy of play with the wind. When the children go back to their nursery class room, a few of them

may gather near the piano. Others may be in little groups and conversation may be guided by the leader. Let the children talk about the wind. Try to develop the idea that they cannot see the wind but they can *feel* it. The wind blows hats off. It tosses leaves and papers. It is fun to run in the wind.

There may have been prayer opportunities while outdoors or after the children have returned to the room. "It is such fun to play in the wind" or "Thank you, God, for happy times at church with friends. We like to play in the wind." If the children have balloons to take home with them, be sure to warn them to hold tightly so the wind will not play a joke and carry the balloon away.

Second Sunday

GETTING READY FOR THE SESSION

Usually there are several children in the nursery class who have younger brothers or sisters at home. However, if there are no younger brothers or sisters, the leader may decide to use the story "Caring for the Baby Jesus" on this Sunday with the accompanying picture on the third cover page of *My Book for Winter*, Part II. If the leader does decide to use this other story, the picture "Helping to Care for Baby Sister" may be one of the mounted pictures ready for use. Little children are interested in babies.

WHEN THE CHILDREN COME

The pictures may help them to discuss ways in which mothers care for the babies at home. Some child may refer to the blanket or carriage or some other keepsake that "My mother had when I was a little baby." Doll play may be encouraged and the children may play that they are caring for the baby just as mother cares for the baby in the home. The game, "Getting Ready for Nursery Class," may be played by substituting the words so that it will be a game of taking care of baby sister.

The leader will make use of opportunities for stressing the greater responsibilities that the big girls and boys in the nursery class enjoy. The little baby cannot run around outdoors nor

come to nursery class. Big girls and boys can help mother to take care of the baby and can remember to put away their toys and hang their own wraps, and so on. The purpose behind the conversation, of course, is to lead the little child to a sense of security and away from any feeling of jealousy toward the baby who may seem to have usurped his place in the home. The fact also may be developed that mother and daddy and Billy and Nell love the little baby and take care of him. Mother and daddy love Billy and Nell also and they take care of them.

There may be more than one prayer opportunity during the session. "Thank you, God, for little babies. Thank you for mothers and fathers who take care of the babies" or "We are glad that we can help to take care of the little babies. Thank you, God, for babies" are suggestive of prayers that may be used.

There may be a request from the children to go out again this Sunday to play with the wind. The leader will decide whether this activity shall be continued. Perhaps she will use the colored bits of paper tied to strings, or the feathers, instead of the balloons.

If possible, each child should be presented with a twig of forsythia. They may be told that this is a surprise. They should take the surprise home and put it in a glass of water and watch it to see what will happen before next Sunday. There may be a few extra twigs that the children may place in a vase of water in the nursery class room. These they may put aside to see next Sunday. If the shrubbery around the church includes forsythia bushes, trimmings from them will provide enough twigs for the children. In this case the leader will consult with the janitor or the persons responsible for trimming the bushes and will plan for the children to take home the twigs the week that the bushes are trimmed. It will probably be a more joyous experience for the children if the leader does not tell what will happen to the twigs. They may guess that "leaves will come out" or "it's a flower" but she can encourage them to think of it as a "surprise." If the children are tired, there should be the usual rest period before time to go home.

Third Sunday

GETTING READY FOR THE SESSION

The blossoming forsythia twigs should be on a low table or bench where the children can see, touch, and smell them.

If bulbs were planted in the fall, there should be one available for the children to see and smell so that the planting experience can be recalled. If the bulbs are to be placed in water, the leader will have the bulbs, the dish and some stones ready for the planting.

WHEN THE CHILDREN COME

The children will probably be eager to tell what happened to the "surprise" that they carried home with them on the previous Sunday. The vase of twigs left at the church probably will be in bloom. If any children come on this Sunday who were not there the previous one, they may be given a twig to carry home, but the "surprise" will not be so great since they have seen the blossoms in the nursery class room.

If any bulbs have been planted around the church, the leader should plan for the children to watch for the first signs of green shoots. If no bulbs were planted outdoors, some may be set in a dish of stones in the nursery class and put away in the dark until the green leaves begin to sprout and the buds start. The leader will watch carefully for all signs of growth outdoors so that she will be able to help the children to appreciate it.

In those parts of the country where there are no evidences of spring, the suggestions for procedure for this session should be set aside for a later time when the children can appreciate the first evidences of spring. The plans for some other Sunday (possibly second Sunday in April, see page 91) will be substituted and this session will be used when it best meets the needs and interests of the children.

Where spring has advanced enough for the children to find evidences outdoors, the picture and story, "Finding a Surprise" (*My Book for Winter, Part II*) may be used. If possible, a blossoming hyacinth should be in the nursery class room, either the potted plant or a cut spray of flowers. The children may

be encouraged to notice the color, to smell, even to touch it gently. Over and over the leader may remind the children, "We could not make it grow. We could help God by planting the bulb, but the rain must come and the sun must shine. Then the flower grows. God makes the flowers to bloom. We can only help as we plant them." This session should hold many opportunities for brief "seconds of worship." Perhaps there may be one as the leader talks with different children about the flower. Perhaps it will come as the children discover evidences of spring outdoors. It may be that such a second of worship comes during the brief prayer "Thank you, God, for flowers" or "Thank you, God, for the surprises in the spring."

The song "Snow" may be used by substituting the word "flowers." If the children are in a city church or any other situation where they cannot be outdoors but the plant is brought in for them to see, the leader will be sure that there are bulbs similar to that from which the plant grew for the children to feel. Perhaps they may plant bulbs in the pebbles. They may wish to put them in the flowerpot, but this is such a long time process that the growth in the dish of water probably will be better. If the bulbs are planted, this will be an interest that will carry over for several weeks, and the children may add water to the bowl each Sunday.

After singing "Flowers" (see "Snow," page 222), and perhaps telling the story, "Finding a Surprise," there may be no response from the children at all. They may seem to pay no attention to what has been said or may run off to play with their blocks or dolls or to look at the books or pictures. This should not disturb the leader. Very often little children hear most and have listened more attentively when they have seemed to pay little heed to anything that was said. The children will play together informally and the leaders will follow them. There may be a request for one of the games that they have enjoyed during other sessions.

Fourth Sunday

GETTING READY FOR THE SESSION

The leader will have nesting materials ready for use. If a visit to the sanctuary is planned, the leader should make sure

that any adult classes who may meet in part of the sanctuary may understand the purpose of the children's visit so that they will not be annoyed nor will they interfere with the value of the visit for the children. Values must be conserved for all age groups in the church school.

WHEN THE CHILDREN COME

As the children are greeted, some of them are sure to ask about the bulbs. Let the children examine the bulbs and add water to the bowl. They may notice only a little growth. Explain that a few days longer are needed before the flowers will be big enough to be out in the light.

The pianist may play "When I'm Very Happy" and the leader will use every available opportunity to sing this and "God's Care" to the children. The leader will have soft bits of material, as pieces of yarn or string or gaily colored floss, so that the children may place nesting materials outdoors for the birds. Where there is no opportunity for this activity during the class session, the children may be given the pieces of material to carry home. It may be well to have a brief note: "Dear Mother and Father: _____ has a bit of yarn to place outdoors for the birds to use in building their nests." Explain to the child that the note will tell mother and daddy about the piece of yarn but that he may tell also.

The picture and story for "Let's Sing" may be in a prominent place today along with the pictures of birds, bird nests and spring flowers.

It is likely that many of the children have wished to take their turn playing the piano at some time during the year. The leader will help the children to remember to play quietly, not to bang on the piano but to use one finger. Sometimes groups of children enjoy taking turns playing while one or two other children sing to the accompaniment. The pianist or leader may sing with the children who are interested. "When I'm Very Happy" or "God's Care" may be repeated several times.

After the children have played informally, the leader may show the nesting materials and ask whether they would like to go for a walk again this Sunday. Be sure to provide oppor-

tunities for them to examine any new evidences of spring, as opening leaves, tiny green shoots, little buds that may appear, or flowers that may be in bloom. If the group planted bulbs last fall, they will be especially interested to see the flowers. This should offer a significant worship opportunity.

In parts of the country where it is still too cold for this activity, the leader may take the children into the sanctuary. If there is to be a visit in the sanctuary, the leader will talk to small groups of the children before they leave the nursery class room. She will explain that some of them are going into another part of the church. This will be the part of the church where mother and daddy listen when Dr. _____ talks to them. Perhaps she may be able to tell that Dickie's father and Marilyn's mother sit in the front part of the room and sing for all the other persons. Just before they enter the sanctuary the leader will speak to the children in low tones but distinctly so that each child hears. She will explain that they are always quiet when they go into this room. They may look at the windows and ask any questions they wish, but voices are kept low and the children will walk quietly.

The attitude of the teacher regarding a visit to the sanctuary will set the tempo for the children. If the teachers are joyous but quiet, happy and reverent yet friendly and co-operative as they meet the needs of the children, the children will respond in the same way. There will be a certain dignity and quiet joy evidenced by the group during their visit in the sanctuary.

Since this is the first planned visit of the group into the church sanctuary, there will just be a general appreciation of it. If the children notice the colors streaming through the windows, let them enjoy them. On this visit nothing special except flowers will be pointed out to them. This will be a brief visit. The children will merely walk in and look around and then quietly go out. If they wish to go up and down the church steps for a few times, they may do so. When the children are placing the nesting materials or after they have returned to the room, there may be an opportunity for the prayer "We are glad to help the birds build their nests. Thank you, God, for birds" or the words of the song "When I'm Very Happy" may be used as a prayer.

While they are in the sanctuary, there may be the prayer

"We like to visit this part of our church. Thank you, God, for friends at church." After the children have returned to the nursery class room, they may be encouraged to follow their own interests. The pianist may play "When I'm Very Happy" and "God's Care" and the leader may go from group to group or from child to child and sing the words of the song several times. In this way the children become better acquainted with the songs. Some of them may begin to sing with the leader.

When there are five sessions in March, the suggestions from some other month will be transferred to March. Probably the suggestions will be used for only four weeks in January and one of the procedures for that month may be substituted for March, or one of the sessions from the next quarter suggestions may be transferred to March. The nursery class leader must always remember that her plans are flexible. She will frequently discard all plans made before the session as she follows the needs of the children. For this reason no teacher can use all of the suggestions that have been offered up to this time. There will be many sessions when she will appear merely to continue activities and interests evidenced during the previous week or possibly two or three weeks. While we do not expect the attention span of little children to last over a long period, we frequently find that they do recall interests. To follow their lead will help us to make use of worth-while principles in learning.

A CHECK-UP FOR THE NURSERY LEADERS

List any evidences of social or emotional growth that you have noted in each child this year.

Have you used available opportunities to develop as a leader of little children? Read the following list of suggestions. Check those you have done and make a double check beside those you plan to do, beginning at once.

1. Have read at least one book or reference pamphlet a month related to nursery class work (see bibliography for suggested list).
2. Attend worship service at church regularly.
3. Plan to take Leadership Training course.

4. Have visited the home of each child enrolled in nursery class.
5. Have kept careful record of each child, in which is noted name, address, birthday, special interests in nursery class, evidences of social, emotional, religious or mental growth.
6. Have been regular and punctual in attendance *every Sunday*, with unavoidable absences reported to nursery class superintendent before Sunday. (If you are the superintendent, absence reported to another leader who is capable of carrying forward procedures.)
7. Have read all of *My Book for Fall*, Part I, and *My Book for Winter*, Part II.
8. Have read this entire book, *Religious Nurture in Nursery Class and Home*, and have studied suggested procedures for each week, before the Sunday session.

A P R I L

POSSIBLE MATERIALS AND ACTIVITIES:

Possible stories for April (select from these stories in *My Book for Spring*, Part III): "When Our Minister Comes to Nursery Class," "On Easter Day," "Making a Garden," "Four Years Old," "Going to See Jesus."

Possible songs for April (see pages 216-223): "When I'm Very Happy," "Friends at Church," "The Church Bells," "Pitter Patter," "God's Care," "New Chicks."

Possible activities for April: Discovering buds on branches of trees and plants and other signs of spring. Watching rain and, if possible, watching birds hopping around in the rain. Sharing toys with the minister. Planting seeds. Housekeeping play including play of having a birthday party.

Introduction

WHEN the nursery leader plans for the month of April, she will check on possibilities for springtime learnings in her own locality. Some leaders in the more southern parts of the country will find that the activities that center around planting a garden may come early in the month. In other sections of the country one of the procedures suggested for later in the month may be substituted and the garden activity be developed when the weather is warm enough to warrant this outdoor experience. The suggestions for five Sundays in April include Easter plans. Where it is necessary to make rearrangements, the leader will use her own judgment about it. **I**n some years

the Easter session will be used in March. When April is a four-Sunday month the suggestions for one session will be transferred to the fifth Sunday in the preceding month.

The leader may help the children to enjoy watching the rain rather than to think of rain as the reason why outdoor play is impossible. The leader who emphasizes signs of spring in March will wish to continue this interest in April. Those who have not done so will probably wish to plan for this emphasis. With a little encouragement the children will discover dandelions in the grass, tulips and jonquils, and will eagerly tell about any of these flowers in their own yards or in the yards of neighbors. A very small garden space, eighteen inches long and twelve inches wide, will do nicely for a nursery class garden. It may even be that the leader will be limited to planting a few morning-glories along a fence. Marigolds and zinnias are quite satisfactory flowers for little children because they blossom quickly and profusely and flourish even when the only available garden space is poor soil. If there is no garden space available, a window box may be used. Perhaps the janitor could carry this out to the steps so that the children may have the "feel" of working in the outdoors while planting their seeds.

The pastor of a church should minister to its entire membership. It may be impossible for him to know every child by name, but friendly recognition given to these youngest members of the church group counts for much in building the general spirit and morale of the entire church membership.

The minister of the church who does not visit the nursery class of the church school regularly is missing a real opportunity. Perhaps the nursery class superintendent can change this situation. She will explain to the minister how helpful is his brief visit each Sunday, for even just long enough for the children to see him regularly and to recognize him as their minister and their friend.

When the nursery class leader invites the pastor to visit the group, she will mention to him that the nursery class is the child's first introduction to the church. She will explain that the children learn to share and take turns, that, occasionally, they sing together and sometimes there is a brief story. She will also point out the purpose and value of visits to the

sanctuary for the children and will help the minister to understand that, through these visits, the children become acquainted with another part of their church and that a feeling of security is built up as they know this as the part of the church where their mothers and daddies come to sing and to listen to Dr. Smith, the minister. He tells them some of the same stories that the girls and boys hear in nursery class. Such a brief, simple explanation will help the minister to realize that, while there is no formal program for three-year-old children in the church school, the leader is aware of the religious needs of little children constantly as she plans possible procedures.

In those sections of the country in which there is very heavy rainfall during April, the children are likely to be restless and to appear noisy. The leader will remind herself that atmospheric conditions influence the lives of little children and may be the cause of noise in the room. She may plan for quiet forms of play, but she should also include activities that will exercise the larger muscles. She will show the children how to run quietly and will encourage low talking rather than the high-pitched, excited tones and loud squeals that are frequently heard in groups of children. "We save our loud voices for outdoors. We use soft voices in our nursery class room" may help the children to lower their voices. If there has been so much rain that the children have heard adults express fear of floods, conversation should be centered on being glad for a nice dry room in which to play and for rubbers and umbrellas, and so on.

Easter Sunday

A special need that arises at this time of year is the isolation of the children from the adult celebration of Easter. Those children who may have heard stories or seen pictures of the events preceding the first Easter may need special help to safeguard them from an emotional shock that may not have been evident to the persons who showed them the pictures. No mention of the Crucifixion or Resurrection either by name or description of what it means will ever be used with nursery children. Easter to adults is a day of rejoicing because of the

risen Christ after the days when they have remembered His suffering.

For the little child there is a simpler, non-theological interpretation of the season. The leader may speak of the joy of Easter. She will try to arouse a sense of happiness and a feeling of security because of the beauty of bursting buds, opening leaves, gaily colored flowers and singing birds. The interpretation of Easter for these three-year-olds will remain one of joyous celebration because of the return of spring, the growth of the seeds and flowers that they have planted, the opening up of tiny leaves and the feeling that this is God's world. He has given us many things richly to enjoy.

The little child is not taken into the Easter service planned for adults or for older children. These experiences are far beyond the understanding of early childhood and tend to arouse fear, questioning and misunderstanding. They do not meet the religious need of little children for they only confuse and shock them.

GETTING READY FOR THE SESSION

In some sections of the country, great emphasis is placed on the Easter bunny. Where this is a common practice the nursery leader will guard against overexcitement and overstimulation of the children. There should be some flowers in the nursery class room for Easter Sunday, a pot of jonquils or tulips, or hyacinths or an Easter lily. If the sanctuary is decorated and is not in use during the hour that the nursery class meets, the leader may plan to take the children in to see and smell the flowers.

WHEN THE CHILDREN COME

Encourage informal conversation. It is quite likely that the children will have new spring dresses and suits. The colors may be matched with the flowers in the room.

The children will be sure to admire the flower that is to go to the sanctuary. It may be possible to talk together first about the flower in their nursery class room and then to carry it in and put it with the other flowers so that when mothers and daddies see it, they will remember, "This is Easter Day."

If there are bushes around the church that have tiny leaves or if forsythia bushes are in bloom, plan to go out to look at them. Try to help the children to feel "This is Easter Day. God planned for snow and rain and sunshine. God makes the flowers grow." Have a thank-you prayer beside the bush or flower. If there are no bushes around the church lawn, the same idea may be carried out with the plant in the nursery class room. Help the children to understand that this is their plant that is to go into the other part of the church for Easter Day. They may smell it and touch it carefully. Easter is a happy day. When we see the flowers they help us to remember, "This is Easter Day. God loves us. He makes the flowers grow."

The word "flowers" may be substituted for the word "snow" in the song. The children may also join with the leader as she sings "When I'm Very Happy" or "God's Care." If a story is told, either "On Easter Day" or "Going to See Jesus" may be the one that is used. If "Going to See Jesus" is used, the children may enjoy giving names to the children in the picture (see page 7, *My Book for Spring, Part III*). Perhaps the leader will use the names of the children in the group as she tells the story and shows the picture.

If it is possible to take their plant into the sanctuary, the leader should plan to have the children do this before anyone else is in the church. Perhaps the group may stand in the church and sing "Flowers, flowers, flowers" or "When I'm Very Happy" or "Sing, O Sing." The leader may find this an opportune time for a prayer.

If it is an established custom of the church to give the children a pot of pansies or a fern or some other plant at Easter, these may be placed around the room as decorations. Then one may be given to each child as he leaves.

First Sunday

GETTING READY FOR THE SESSION

If this is Easter Sunday, the suggested plan for Easter day may be studied as a possible procedure.

As usual the leader will be guided by the needs of the children and the part of the country in which she is teaching.

If it is possible to plant the seeds outdoors today or, lacking outdoor space, to plant seeds in the window box or large flower pot, the leader will have the soil and seeds ready.

If it is a rainy day, the leader will have a large sheet of wrapping paper available (see suggestions, page 91).

WHEN THE CHILDREN COME

As the children are greeted some may speak of their new shoes, hats, socks, coats, dresses, suits. New clothing is important to little children. The leaders will rejoice with the children. They may speak of the new spring dress or spring shoes rather than placing the emphasis on Easter clothes. The leader may mention the gay spring flowers, yellow and pink and red tulips, and so on, and the pretty spring suits and dresses just the same color.

If the children go outdoors, there may be an opportunity to see ants, bees, or butterflies. For many children this will be a new experience. It is not to be expected that nursery children will remember having seen these small creatures the previous year. Should there be an opportunity of pointing out a bee to the group, the leader will help the children to realize that bees are not likely to sting unless they are bothered. Perhaps she will call attention to the way bees are covered with yellow dust and will give the simple explanation, "The flowers need the bees. They carry the yellow dust on their bodies from one flower to another. Then next year there will be more flowers."

The story "Making a Garden" may be told as the children are working. If preferred, small plants such as pansies may be set out, but handling seeds and placing them in the ground and watching the first tiny green shoots is a valuable experience for little children.

"We like to plant seeds, dear God" or "Thank you, God, for seeds and flowers" may be appropriate prayers for this activity. "God's Care" and "When I'm Very Happy" may be sung.

Alternate Plan

If this is a rainy Sunday, the leader will possibly decide to talk about rain. The children will enjoy telling about the way

they put on their rubbers and carry their umbrellas or storm coats. Rainy day pictures will be available for the children to enjoy. Conversation should include the fun of walking in the rain.

There may be opportunities to watch the rain on the window pane or in a puddle or coming from a rain spout. Perhaps the children will see a robin pulling a worm out of the ground, or a pigeon or a sparrow may take a bath in a puddle as they watch. Just watching the rain drops splash in the puddles and talking about boys and girls knowing how to walk around puddles makes profitable discussion.

The children may play that they are getting ready to go out in the rain. They will pretend to put on their rubbers and storm coats and to raise an umbrella. A large piece of brown paper may be cut in the shape of a mud puddle or a chalk mark may be made on the bare floor or linoleum. The children may have the fun of showing how they walk around the edge of a mud puddle. Reference may be made to the fact that boys and girls who remember to walk around mud puddles are big enough to help care for themselves. "Thank you, God, for a nice dry room in which to play at church" or "We are glad to see the rain. We are glad to see the grass and flowers grow after the rain" may be prayers for this rainy day session.

The song "Pitter Patter" may be sung to the children. This is a new song and it is not likely that the children will remember anything except the words "pitter patter" but they will enjoy singing these words over and over. The leader may sing the song as the children skip around the room or as they gather near the piano or play informally in the interest centers.

Second Sunday

GETTING READY FOR THE SESSION

If the minister is to be invited to visit the group, this would be a good Sunday for him to come. The leader will need to make careful preparation. Perhaps, she is teaching in a church fortunate enough to have a minister who makes frequent visits in the nursery class. In this case it will be a simple matter to explain that the leader hopes the minister will stay for at least

ten minutes on this Sunday so that all the children who wish to do so may have an opportunity to share their toys or sing together for the minister. The cover page of *My Book for Spring*, Part III, will be mounted ready for use and may be the center for conversation as the children plan what they will show the minister.

If the minister is not accustomed to visiting in the nursery class, the leader will carefully explain that she would like him to come in and just watch the children. If they volunteer any information or show him their toys or sing, he may enter into the joy of the situation with them, but the leader does not expect him to talk to the children nor tell them a story. He is invited to become one of the group.

WHEN THE CHILDREN COME

After the children are greeted and wraps are hung, the children will select their activities as usual. Doll play may be encouraged, or some of the children may wish to build with the blocks or roll the ball or play with some of the small toys. If it is a rainy day, the activities from the previous Sunday may be recalled. Perhaps, some of the children will wish to watch out the windows or play keeping out of the mud puddles as they did last week. If the doll clothes have been laundered recently, some little girl may discover for the first time that she can dress and undress the dolls without any assistance. The children may also be encouraged to make the doll beds and take the baby for a ride in the doll carriage. The leader may explain to the small groups as she moves around the room that Dr. —————, our minister, is coming to see us today. "I think he would like to see your doll, Suzanne. Judy may wish to show him her doll also." In the same way the children who are building with blocks may be told about the minister's visit and encouraged to show him the blocks or any of the pull toys or the color cone. If any of the children are interested in singing, they may be told of the minister's visit while they are near the piano. Perhaps they would like Dr. ————— to hear their nursery class song, "Taking Turns" or "God's Care" or "The Church Bells."

If there are flowers in the nursery class room, it will be fun

to match the colors of the flowers with the colors of children's dresses and suits. They may sit in small groups of three or four and vary the "Get Acquainted Game" (see page 199) by matching colors. In this way, the leader or a child may touch Jean's blue hair ribbon, the red trimming on Harold's blouse, the yellow in Dickie's socks, Ruth's pink dress. These colors may be matched with any flowers that are in the room. Perhaps the leader may emphasize the color of the flowers by saying, "There are yellow dandelions and jonquils and pink hyacinths and red tulips, and green grass." This may lead to an opportunity to say "Thank you, God." The leader will not force prayer and she will continue in the simplicity of expression at all times when she leads little children in prayer. She will remember also that prayers are always addressed to God and will mention specific causes for joy or thanksgiving.

The story "When the Minister Comes to Nursery Class" may be used if a story is needed. The children may speak of the visit to the sanctuary and some may ask to go again this Sunday. If there is no one in the church sanctuary at this time, it will be well to go with the children again. If there are colored windows or cushions in the pews, or any other color, there will be the joy of the sensory experience of picking out and naming these colors. The children may like to feel the cushions on the pews or to run their hands along the smooth wood of the benches. The leader may explain that Dr. _____, our minister, stands here (indicating the place) when he talks to the mothers and daddies.

The leader will know at what time to expect the minister and will have the children in their own room at the time of his expected visit. Since they have talked over the different toys that they will show the minister, there may be less shyness than might otherwise be expected. If any of the children in the group are already acquainted with the minister, they will be eager to say "Hello" to him and to show him some of the toys. The children who wish to do so may sing any of their songs. Those who have built with the blocks may show him what they have made. Perhaps some of the children would like to take him over to the picture screen and point out some of the pictures that they like or show him one of their books. If pansy plants were planted in the window box or flower gar-

den, the children may select one or two pansies from their very own garden to give to the minister for him to wear in the lapel of his coat. This should be a most informal occasion when the children add one more friend to those whom they have already met in the church school. There may be an opportunity for a brief prayer after the minister's visit when the children are led to express gratitude for friends at church including the minister.

During the session the leaders may sing "Friends at Church" (see page 219) several times, as they move from one small group of children to another.

Third Sunday

GETTING READY FOR THE SESSION

If any of the children has just reached his fourth birthday or if there are children who are within a month of being four years old, they will be especially interested in the picture "Four Years Old." It may be mounted and ready for use for this session. There should be one or two watering cans ready for the children to fill and use.

WHEN THE CHILDREN COME

As they arrive, some children may be interested in watering their flower garden or window box. Two or three small watering cans should be available for this purpose. A large pitcher of water may be in the room ready to fill the cans. If the children fill them directly from the faucet, an assistant may be standing there to turn the water on and off. In this way the actual work of watering the flowers may be done by the children "taking turns" but the danger of getting themselves wet will be avoided.

Should there be a fruit tree near the church, the leader may arrange with the person owning the tree to have the children visit this yard. There will be the joy of walking or skipping along together. They may see the blossoms on the tree. Probably some of the children will tell of other fruit trees in their own yards or neighbors' yards. It may be that the leader in a city church can secure a spray of fruit blossoms for the chil-

dren to see. If they go to visit the tree, each child may be lifted to smell the blossoms. Let them touch the blossoms but help them to know that they must touch carefully. Such an experience as this should offer several prayer opportunities. The group or the leader and one or two of the children may sing together.

After this activity the children may enjoy building with the blocks or playing with the dolls, or a few may gather at the piano for music. Some may choose to use the blocks near the piano and to sing with the pianist or to make up their own words and sing to themselves as they build with the blocks. Others may build a fence of blocks around an imaginary yard or trees or flower bed.

However, it may be that none of the children will be interested in block building and so the leader will be prepared for any other interests that are shown. Doll play may be encouraged or the leader may plan to play "Getting Ready for Nursery Class" with small groups and will encourage the children to tell of different activities that they follow at home. They should be commended for being big enough to comb their hair and brush their teeth, put on their shoes, manage their own wraps, and so on. Big girls and boys who are four years old or nearly four can do many things for themselves. Growing big means that they are better able to care for themselves.

The story "Four Years Old" may be told if a story is needed. If there are no children who have birthdays on this Sunday, "Happy Birthday" may be sung to those who have recently become four years old or to those who are soon to be four years old. "Friends at Church" is another appropriate song.

It is likely that all of the children in the group will claim to be four when they hear that age mentioned, but the leader will know each child and his age. She may say, "No, Jimmy. You are not four years old yet, but you are growing. You are learning to take care of yourself and your wraps, and soon you will be one of our biggest boys. Then you will be four years old. That means that you are old enough and big enough to help mother at home and to help other girls and boys here at church. Big four-year-old girls and boys go into the kindergarten. We need big boys like Jimmy to help us here with the new children who come to nursery class." In this way there is

not so much attention given to the four-year-olds that the younger children feel neglected. They should be helped to realize that they, too, have definite responsibilities for the happiness of the group.

Fourth Sunday

GETTING READY FOR THE SESSION

If it is possible to procure a baby chick to take to the nursery class for this session, the leader will plan to do so. Pictures of baby chickens and mother hens may be mounted ready for use. A small tin lid for water and some little-chick feed may be taken to the group. The chick should be kept in a box or basket with a covering so that it may rest most of the time. The leader will keep it for a surprise.

WHEN THE CHILDREN COME

After removal of wraps, the children will choose their activity as usual. The pianist may play softly during this time. Probably some of the children will come close to the piano to sing with her.

The leader will decide when she wishes to show the baby chick to the group. She may get the box or basket and hold it in her hands without speaking. Some child is quite sure to ask "What is in the box?" Then the children may be invited to "Come listen. See if you can tell me what it is." Moving the box will probably have made the baby chick begin to "peep." Let each child have an opportunity to listen. Some child will be likely to recognize the "peep peep" as the call of the baby chick. The leader will draw attention to the holes in the box and explain why air holes are necessary.

When the lid is taken off the box, the chick may be admired by all. The leader will be sure to emphasize the need for touching it very gently. "We are careful when we touch little baby chickens. They are so small. We stroke them this way." Show the children how to touch the chick. Give them an opportunity to put water into the lid and to scatter a little of the chick feed either in the box or on a paper on the floor where the chick may eat. Explain that after the baby chick has had

something to eat it must be covered again so that it may take a nap.

Probably, the children will be flat on the floor or will be stooping close to the chicken to watch it. If the day is a warm one, it may be possible to take the chicken out on the grass in a sunny place and let the children watch it there. This is not advisable if the ground is too damp or cold for the children to kneel or stoop with safety.

The purpose of having the baby chick in the nursery class is that the children may have firsthand experience with some little live creature and may be helped to realize how careful they must be with little birds or animals. Some of the children may tell of a canary bird they have at home and of its daily care.

If the leader does not consider it practical to take a baby chick into the group, the children may be taken to a house near the church where there are baby chicks. The leader has previously arranged with the person there, of course. If this visit is a possible activity, there probably will be a mother hen who will call "cluck, cluck, cluck." The children should notice this call of the mother hen and the answer of the baby chicks, "peep, peep, peep." Unfortunately very few nursery groups will be privileged to enjoy a real visit to a mother hen and baby chicks.

Sometimes in a city group the children may be taken to watch the baby chicks in a store window if the store is within easy walking distance of the church and there is no traffic hazard. Here the children may see the chicks. They may watch them as they drink and peck at the feed, but they cannot hear the call.

After the box with the chicks has been put away or after the children have returned to the nursery class room following the visit, the leader may sing mother hen's call, "cluck, cluck, cluck" running the scale (see "Leaves Are Falling," page 219). Let the children sing the "cluck, cluck, cluck" together. Then talk about the baby chicks' "peep, peep, peep" and encourage them to sing this also. Some child may suggest that the daddy rooster calls "cockle-doodle-doo." If no child volunteers this suggestion, the leader may ask what daddy rooster says. Then the rooster call might also be sung. Usually this proves great

fun and the children will wish to sing it over and over again. Some of the children may wish to play they are baby chicks calling "peep, peep, peep." The leader may be mother hen who says "cluck, cluck" and ruffles her feathers and the baby chicks run over close to her as she sings "New Chicks" (see page 221).

There undoubtedly will be several opportunities for singing together and for a short prayer as the children enjoy talking about the chicks or as they watch the baby chicks or mother hen. There may be several requests during the session to see the baby chicks again. The leader should grant these requests so far as possible. Each time she will explain that they must be careful when they touch the baby chick. It probably will be better not to take it out of the box again but to let the children look at it as it runs around in the box.

If it is possible to have any spring flowers in the room today, the children should be given an opportunity to put the water in the vase or bowl and to arrange the flowers. Help them to place the stems in the water carefully.

Probably the flowers will need to be watered again and the children's attention will be directed toward the swelling buds or blossoms that have developed since last Sunday.

There are four sessions suggested for this month in addition to the Easter Day plans, which precede the Sunday by Sunday procedure. If Easter Day came in March, suggestions for procedure for one Sunday in March may be transferred to one Sunday in April.

M A Y

POSSIBLE MATERIALS AND ACTIVITIES:

Possible stories for May (select from these stories in *My Book for Spring*, Part III): "Putting Away Toys," "The Clean Walk," "Joe's Airplane," "My Friend the Barber," "Going for a Walk."

Possible songs for May (see pages 216-223): "When I'm Very Happy," "Pitter Patter," "Friends at Church," "God's Care," "Snow."

Possible activities for May: Continuance of spring activities. Possible discussion and observance of Mother's Day. Housekeeping play. Taking a walk outdoors.

Introduction

IN THE southern part of this country, May will probably usher in evidences of summer instead of spring, but for the middle section and the states farther north, the spring emphasis will still be needed. If the nursery class children can be helped to become aware of the richness of beauty around them, much has been done for the beginning of what may later lead to worship for the little child.

Wherever it is possible the children should have firsthand experiences with the blossoming forsythia bush, a redbud tree, an apple tree or other flowering fruit trees. Where these firsthand experiences are not possible the leader may bring a square of sod and place it in a box. It may be tended by the children. Grass seed may be sown in a window box as well as flower seeds that the children may watch for the first sprout.

It is well for the nursery leader to plan at several regular intervals during the year to expose all of the nursery toys and books to the direct rays of the sun for from forty-five minutes to an hour. Scientists give the assurance that this plan is adequate to make the toys germproof. Dolls may be exposed with the rest of the toys and, in addition, should be scrubbed. Even if the paint comes off the faces, a thorough cleansing is necessary. Cold cream will remove most of the soil from the dolls' faces and hands. This does not harm the paint but the dolls are much more sanitary if they are scrubbed carefully. Doll clothes and bedding will be washed and ironed every two or three weeks both for sanitary reasons and in order that they may be neat and attractive. Small toys should be washed and even blocks may be scrubbed when necessary. Probably this month will be a good time for this thorough housecleaning of the toys and equipment.

First Sunday

GETTING READY FOR THE SESSION

By now the children should be well enough acquainted with their room to know where all the toys belong. On this Sunday the blocks may be left in their box, the toys in the toy chest or on the toy shelf. Previous to this time there have been toys put out ready for use each Sunday.

Pictures of children putting away toys or hanging their wraps may be mounted and ready for use.

WHEN THE CHILDREN COME

After the children are greeted they will be given a choice of activity and then encouraged to get their own toys.

The leader will build on the emphasis of a previous Sunday (see second Sunday in March, page 77), that is, being big enough to do many things. Girls and boys who are big enough for nursery class are big enough to help mother at home and to help the leader in nursery class as they remember to put away their toys. Housekeeping play may be encouraged but whatever activities are followed, the leaders will stress the fact that a child should put a toy back where it belongs when he has

finished with it. Then another child may find it to use if he wishes. If a story is needed, "Putting Away Toys" may be the one that is told.

Several children in the group may wish to bring favorite toys to the nursery class with them. Most of the children who have attended regularly will take it as a matter of course that toys brought to nursery class will be shared with the other children. There is likely to be a wide variety such as a favorite doll, a much worn dog, a toy truck. Even such treasures as empty boxes, discarded compacts or purses, or bits of bright ribbon may be brought to show to the others. The leader will show interest in all of these treasures when they are brought to her. She should evidence due appreciation for each one.

The children should be encouraged to find their own occupations. It may be necessary to make suggestions to some, but it is well to provide a choice so that none of the group will be engaged entirely in teacher-initiated projects. Words of the songs should be more familiar by now. Perhaps several of the group will be interested in listening to music and some may request some of the songs. There may be a request for the use of the bells to jingle as they did at Christmastime.

Where skilled leadership in music is available, this interest in the bells might develop into a nursery band. It would include a triangle and drum in addition to the bells. Little children respond quickly to rhythm and would enjoy such an activity, but it should not be attempted except under guidance of a person who understands the use of music with three-year-old children and both the dangers and advantages of establishing a rhythm band with this younger group.

All possible prayer opportunities should be recognized and used.

Second Sunday

GETTING READY FOR THE SESSION

Mother's Day will have little meaning for three-year-old children unless older brothers or sisters or the parents talk about it. Even then it is likely to be just a name or, as some of the children have called it, "My Mother's Day." Should

the children give evidence of having heard about Mother's Day, build on what they seem to know about it. Otherwise, the leader may suggest that this day is called Mother's Day and the song "Snow" may be used with the substitution of the word "Mother."

WHEN THE CHILDREN COME

The children may tell of ways that they play with mother at home and ways in which they help mother. Doll play and home centers may be the activities of the session. Under the guidance of the leader, the children may play ways in which they help mother at home. This would be similar to "Getting Ready for Nursery Class" substituting such ideas as "This is the way I put away toys" or "This is the way I sweep the walk," or "This is the way I dry the dishes," and so on. During this game or during housekeeping or doll play, there may be opportunities for a short prayer such as "Thank you, God, for mothers and little babies" or "Thank you, God, for mothers. We like to help mother."

If a story is needed, "The Clean Walk" will be appropriate, or "Putting Away Toys" suggested for the preceding Sunday may be repeated during this session.

If it is possible to secure flowers, the children may carry a bouquet to the mothers' class or, if the mothers happen to be in several classes, the children may take two or three small bouquets to these classes. Of course, the leader will have arranged with the teachers of these classes beforehand so that they will not consider the children's visit an interruption. The children must be guarded from exploitation. One child may say "These are for our mothers" or the leader may make the explanation.

Another plan might be to have the children hand their mothers flowers as they come for them after the session. If this is the plan, it will be necessary during the week to send a note to each mother asking her to come to the nursery class at the close of the session, perhaps five minutes before regular dismissal. At this time the children may sing the song "Snow" substituting the word "Mother" as they present a single flower to each mother. Should it be impossible for some of the mothers

to attend, the child may carry a flower home to mother. If the mothers are to come to the group, the children should be encouraged to put the toys away before it is time for mother to come so that she may see how well the girls and boys straighten up their room and what splendid helpers they are in the nursery class.

Third Sunday

GETTING READY FOR THE SESSION

The leader may take a few empty envelopes from mail that she has received for the children to play that they are letters. Small pieces of paper may be substituted for letters that are carried in the mail plane.

If it is possible to take the children to visit a blossoming fruit tree near the church, the leader will arrange for the visit with the owner of the tree.

WHEN THE CHILDREN COME

The usual informal play will be encouraged as the children come into the nursery class room. Perhaps there will be interest in singing well-known favorite songs. Doll play may be encouraged again this Sunday. If it is possible to have a new airplane, it may be on the toy shelf or in a place where the children can find it readily. It may be called a mail plane. If this emphasis is developed as soon as the toy is discovered, it is less likely that some of the children who have heard of bombers will call this a bomber. There may be conversation about mail being carried to grandmother or to some other relative or to a friend. Small bits of paper or the envelopes that the leader brought may be put in the plane while the children pretend that it is flying and then that it lands. The mail may be taken out and handed out as letters that came from the mail plane.

If a story is used, "Joe's Airplane" is suggested. Perhaps, just conversation about planes and what fun it is to travel in a plane may be used instead of a story. Some of the children may have been in a plane. It is likely that all will be interested in talking about the way planes fly over the houses and higher

than the church and how they sparkle in the sunlight. Some of the children may mention seeing the red and green lights on the plane as it flies by night.

This session should provide an opportunity for establishing a sense of security. The leader will seek to safeguard the children from any experiences that might lead to fear of planes.

Whenever a fruit tree is in blossom within walking distance of the church and it is possible to take the children to see the tree, this plan should be used for that day's session. If such a worth-while activity cannot be planned, the leader may be able to secure a small twig of apple or of some other fruit tree and take it into the nursery class. Pictures of flowers may be among those out for use today. If there is rain during the latter part of the week or if it should be a rainy Sunday, mention may be made of rain that helps little apples to grow. It helps the seeds to grow. It makes the grass green. The children may be led to a feeling of being glad for the rain. The song "Pitter Patter" may be used, and all prayer opportunities should be recognized and used.

Fourth Sunday

GETTING READY FOR THE SESSION

The leader may have the pictures, "My Friend the Barber" and "Going for a Walk," mounted for use this Sunday.

If the suggested plan is to be used of the weekday trip or picnic for the mothers and children, the leader will need to prepare notes for the parents or to notify them before Sunday so that there may be an informal conference to plan for this outing.

WHEN THE CHILDREN COME

The picture of the barber is likely to arouse interest on the part of most of the children, but a few may never have had the experience of going to the barber and may not be particularly interested in it. They may find greater interest in "Going for a Walk."

The leader will need to safeguard the children from any danger of experimental play of barber. She will seek to build

up a feeling of friendliness toward this person and will hope to have the children think of the visit to the barber as a pleasant experience rather than one to be dreaded because of the feel of the cold scissors against the neck or the tickle of the hair as it falls. On the other hand, she does not want to make it such an interesting occasion that the children may decide to play barber at home. "Only grown persons who really know how can cut our hair so that it looks nice. Sometimes mother or daddy will cut it. Sometimes the barber will cut it, but always a grown person does it." The children may wish to tell of their experiences in going to the barber or they may have been in the barber shop with daddy when his hair was trimmed or have gone to the beauty parlor with mother when her hair was trimmed or when she had a shampoo or wave.

Usually little children are sure to include in their description of their visit to the barber shop the hair tonic that "smells so good."

If the leader decides to center attention on "Going for a Walk" the story "Helping to Care for Baby Sister" may be recalled (see *My Book for Winter*, Part II). The children may get the dolls ready to take for a walk or pretend that they are taking them out just as the story tells about the little girl taking her doll out for a walk.

The children will have been encouraged to follow their usual procedure. There should be opportunities for singing together and for prayer. They may enjoy playing "Going to the Barber." In the song they may substitute the words "This is the way my hair is washed," "This is the way I wear the towel," "This is the way I sit up straight," "This is the way my hair is combed," and so on. It is not suggested that the leader have anything depicting the way the barber cuts the hair as it is better to avoid all suggestions of the children cutting hair. There will probably be the usual interest in block building, rolling the ball, looking at the books. Again this Sunday the flowers may be watered if there is a flower garden or window box.

The leader may wish to plan a weekday trip for the mothers and children. They may go to the park or to the country to see signs of spring. If this could be a visit to the country, it might be possible to find a place where violets could be gathered. The leader will need to plan carefully for such a trip.

She will get in touch with the parents probably through a post card, or notes may be sent home with the children and then the parents of any children who are absent may be reached by a note or telephone. The leader will probably plan for or suggest means of transportation. If the visit is to a park, there will be the pleasure of playing "Ring Rosy" and "Follow the Leader," "Teeter-Totter" (see page 219), and possibly "Ball Rolling" on the grass, and the leaves and flowers may be admired but, of course, no flowers can be picked.

Perhaps the mothers will wish to make a little picnic out of this trip. If so, very simple refreshments may be planned, perhaps bread and butter sandwiches with a little brown sugar or maple sugar filling or graham crackers and fruit juice but this would mean providing paper cups. There should be nothing elaborate planned and the mothers should be consulted so that children's diets will not be broken. Perhaps just fruit and crackers will be served. But such a plan would provide a little social event and be a real "picnic" so far as the children are concerned.

J U N E

POSSIBLE MATERIALS AND ACTIVITIES:

Possible stories for June (select from these stories in *My Book for Spring*, Part III): "Rest Time," "Dickie's New Tricycle," "Jerry Washes His Hands," "When Our Company Leaves," "Going to See Jesus."

Possible songs for June (see pages 216-223): "Come and Rest," "Pitter Patter," "When I'm Very Happy," "God's Care," "Taking Turns," "Friends at Church."

Possible activities for June: Housekeeping play. Skipping. Picking dandelions or arranging flowers. Visit to the sanctuary. Play on the tricycle.

Introduction

JUNE will bring summer possibilities and summer problems for the nursery class. After school closes the children are likely to have playmates in the neighborhood. This will help to interpret the idea of taking turns and will give the children the experiences through the week of sharing and playing with a group rather than alone. At the same time there will be the problem of the children who may go away on vacation for several weeks and upon their return will need to readjust to the group. Some may be shy and retiring. Others will wish to tell all about their vacation trips and may have delightful experiences to share.

There may be the problem of special visitors in the nursery class. Some of these visitors will be children from other

nursery groups who will be present only one Sunday or for just a few sessions. These children will be strangers to most of the others. The leader will seek to help the visiting child to be happy and to feel at home. She will encourage the children to find ways to show friendly consideration for the visitor. Then, too, the leader must consider the adult visitors who come to "observe." These persons should be welcomed and the leader will wish to explain to the visitors how she plans the usual procedure and also that the work of the group is informal.

There should never be too many adult visitors in any one session for they should feel free to move around the room so long as they do not disturb or interfere with the activities of the children. The visitors should be encouraged to wait long enough after the session so that the leader may answer any questions and may explain why certain activities were carried out.

Another summer problem is the fact that the children begin to ask for drinks of water. The leader will realize the discomfort suffered by the thirsty child. She knows that one child going for a drink probably will remind every child to make a similar request. She may avoid this problem if she plans each Sunday for all the children to go together for a drink. Perhaps this will be just before time to go home or after the group play or just before rest period. If the children expect a time for a drink, they will refrain from asking for it at other times.

Still another summer problem is that of overfatigue. Longer hours of daylight and the increased play outdoors in the heat with insufficient rest periods and a late hour for bed are likely to cause undue fatigue. Sometimes parents are unaware of this condition and wonder why the children seem tired or irritable. The leaders should watch for symptoms and may be able to provide more quiet forms of play for the tired children. It may be possible to suggest to the parents that Tommy or Phyllis seem unusually tired and to ask whether they have as frequent rest periods as possible during the day.

On any Sunday of the month the leader may substitute the biblical story "Going to See Jesus" for any of the stories that are suggested. One of the colored windows (in some churches) will be of Jesus and the children. If the leader wishes, she may tell the story on one of the Sundays that the children visit the

sanctuary where they may see the window. In addition, the picture on the third cover page may be mounted and ready for use.

First Sunday

GETTING READY FOR THE SESSION

The suggested story and picture for the first Sunday in June are planned to make rest time seem more pleasant to the child. Pictures may be mounted that show children resting and, perhaps, lying under a tree or in a hammock or on the bed.

WHEN THE CHILDREN COME

Doll play may be encouraged. Perhaps block builders will make a bed or a cot or a chair where some of the dolls may rest, or they may build fences to fence in the toy animals and perhaps build a tree from their blocks under which the animals may rest. The leader may talk with the children about the way animals rest at noon time when it is very hot. She will mention the fact that many animals seem to like to be under a tree and that sometimes you will find the animals lying down for a rest in the shade of a tree. Encourage the children to tell about their rest periods, how they take a nap or lie down sometime during the day.

After the children have followed their own interests, there may be an opportunity for them to skip either in the room or outdoors. Then the pianist may play softly while the children come back to the sheet that one of the leaders has spread on the floor and to the usual resting rug or gym mattress. Lullabies may be played softly on the piano and the song "Come and Rest" may be sung over and over to the children. Perhaps a lullaby will be played on the victrola.

If there are trees just outside the window in the nursery class room, the children may lie on the floor and watch the leaves through the open windows. They may listen to the birds chirping or they may see the shadows of the leaves on the windows or on the wall. Perhaps they will talk together about these leaf pictures as they rest.

Another possibility for the churches where there are trees

on the church lawn is for the children to carry the resting rugs out under the trees and to spread them on the ground and lie there for their rest. However, the leader will be sure that the ground is dry and the day is warm enough to make this a safe procedure. If the children are outdoors, the leader may hum a lullaby softly or one may be played on the victrola. Time should be planned for the children to get a drink of water either before this rest period or following it.

If this is a rainy Sunday, the rest will, of course, be indoors and the children may listen to the rain. The music of "Pitter Patter" may recall the words of the song to them. "We are glad for play time. We are glad, too, for rest time. Thank you, God" or "Thank you, God, for friends and play time. Thank you for rest time" are suggested prayers for this session.

Second Sunday

GETTING READY FOR THE SESSION

As usual the leader will be guided in her plans by the needs of the children and the community in which she works. If it is possible to have two or three of the children bring their tricycles to nursery class for this Sunday and there is available space in which to ride them, the leader will arrange with the parents so that the tricycles may be on hand. This may be outdoor play or, if the room is large enough, the tricycles may be ridden around in the nursery class room.

WHEN THE CHILDREN COME

The children will take turns riding as the children did in the story "Dickie's New Tricycle." This picture and any others of children sharing toys may be mounted and available for the children's use. The pianist may play "Taking Turns" and perhaps the leader and children will sing this song during the play. "Thank you, God, for friends at church. We like to take turns with our toys" or "Thank you, God, for friends. We want to remember to take turns when we play" may be appropriate prayers for this Sunday.

After each one has had several turns on the tricycle there should be a place designated as the garage in which the children

will put the tricycle before they begin other play. Some of the children may be interested in singing near the piano. Others may wish to play with the blocks or ball or look at the books or play with the dolls or other toys.

If it is possible for the leader to have one or two cut flowers, the children may arrange them in a bud vase to carry into "the other part of the church." This would provide a purpose for another visit to the sanctuary.

When the children visit the sanctuary, the leader will plan to call their attention to a greater number of interests than they have noticed previously. Perhaps she will arrange to let them feel the offering plates. She will explain that some of the daddies take them to the other mothers and daddies who put their money in these plates just as the girls and boys put their money in the plate or dish or basket in the nursery class. Attention may also be called to the baptismal font.

Perhaps some of the children have recently been baptized, or a young brother or sister may have been baptized. The leader will arrange to have water placed in the font before the visit. Let the children feel the water. Then a simple explanation may be given. "Many fathers and mothers bring their babies or little children to church on a special day. The fathers and mothers carry the children to the minister. Then the minister takes the little baby in his arms and puts just a few drops of water on the baby's head as he says the baby's name. Then all the people know that this church is the baby's church as well as his parents' church."

Call attention again to the colored windows and the soft cushions, the high benches and to the place where the minister stands when he talks to the mothers and daddies. The children may be interested in the organ and may ask about it. The leader may suggest that, if they would like to hear the organ next Sunday, she will ask Miss — (the organist) to play the organ for them. Perhaps, they can bring more flowers in this part of the church and sit in the seats just as mother and daddy do and listen to the music. There might be a prayer such as "Thank you, God, for little babies. We are glad that little babies and girls and boys and fathers and mothers may all come to church."

The children may get a drink as they return to their room, then individual play may be encouraged until the rest period.

Third Sunday

GETTING READY FOR THE SESSION

If the leader plans for a visit to the church sanctuary today, she may be able to have a large bunch of daisies or other flowers ready. She will decide whether it may be an opportune time for the children to listen to the church organ. If so, arrangements should be made with the organist.

WHEN THE CHILDREN COME

The children will be encouraged to fill the vases with water, from pitchers that the leader has ready for them. They may arrange the flowers carefully. Then they may be taken to the washroom where they may wash their hands by themselves under supervision. During conversation about washing hands, the leader may draw the children's attention to the picture "Jerry Washes His Hands." Perhaps there will be a request for this story. If so, it may be told. The children will be encouraged to wash their hands carefully just as Jerry did. Then they will be ready to carry their flowers to the sanctuary.

Some of the children may remember that the leader promised to ask Miss —— to play the organ for them on this Sunday. One or two of the familiar nursery class songs may be played. Perhaps the organist would play "Church Bells," "Friends at Church," "God's Care," or "When I'm Very Happy." If the children wish to sing, they may, but it is likely that they will prefer just to sit in the pews, hear the music and look at the colored windows.

Another plan might be for the children to pick dandelions on the church lawn. While picking dandelions they may just talk together about the wind that blows, the leaves that are growing on the trees, and the flowers in their own garden. If there is no opportunity for the children to go outdoors, they may still enjoy the flowers that the leader has brought into the room. If they do pick dandelions, the hand-washing will be a necessity.

When they go to the sanctuary, the leader will pause just outside the door and remind the children that they always go into this part of the church quietly, that they may ask questions, they may look all around, but they will keep their voices low when they talk. If the flowers have been arranged to take with them, the children will place them where they wish before they climb into the pews to listen to the music.

Some of the children may ask again about the baptismal font or the offering plates. Some may notice the Bible. The leader can explain briefly that it is the Bible. "The Bible is the book from which the minister reads stories about Jesus, some of the same stories that the boys and girls hear in their own nursery class." The leader will allow ample time for the children to get a drink of water and rest between the visit to the sanctuary and the time for the parents to come for the children.

Fourth Sunday

GETTING READY FOR THE SESSION

On this Sunday the leader will have the cover page of *My Book for Spring*, Part III, and the picture "When Our Company Leaves" ready for the children's use. Any other pictures may be included that show visitors in the home or church school or guests leaving.

The leader may also plan to have pictures of butterflies or moths ready for the children to enjoy.

If it is practical, the minister may be invited into the group again this Sunday.

WHEN THE CHILDREN COME

After the children have been greeted, doll play may be encouraged and the suggestion offered that the children play that they have visitors in their home. They will be encouraged to tell what they say to the visitors when they leave.

In some parts of the country the children will be accustomed to hearing the adults' farewell with the added invitation "Come back" or "Hurry back." Little children will imitate this and the friendly courtesy will be extended almost as a habit. The nursery leader may help to encourage this friendly behavior

as she uses a similar type of farewell. As the children leave the nursery class each Sunday she has probably said "Goodby, Joyce. I'll see you next Sunday." "Goodby, Harry, I'll see you next Sunday."

The story "When Our Company Leaves" may be used if a story is needed. Probably there will be no story but the children will be encouraged to talk about making guests happy or making visitors happy in the home or in the nursery class. The leader may speak of the minister as being a visitor and what they would like to show Dr. —— if he comes to the nursery class room again. Or there may be adult visitors in the nursery class this Sunday and the children may find little ways of sharing their good times with them. When the children leave, they will be encouraged to tell the visitors to come again.

As the children notice the pictures of butterflies and moths, they may talk about seeing them fly around the garden. Even city children are likely to have seen butterflies and moths so that they may enter into the conversation and talk about them. The children from less congested places doubtless will have found many butterflies. It is likely that some of the children will tell about lightning bugs or fireflies and the fun that they have watching or catching these insects at night. The leader may build on these interests and may sing "God's Care" substituting the word "butterfly" or "firefly" or "birds."

There may be several prayer opportunities on this Sunday when the minister or other friends or visitors have been welcomed, or after the children have listened to the story, or when they have been talking about the butterflies or fireflies, or when mention has been made of some good time at home and visitors have been entertained.

The leader will be aware constantly that there are many more plans suggested for each Sunday than she is likely to use and that she may wish to vary the suggested procedures to meet the needs of her group. She will decide which activities are of greatest value for the children and will develop these.

J U L Y

POSSIBLE MATERIALS AND ACTIVITIES:

Possible stories for July (select from these stories in *My Book for Summer, Part IV*): "Our Picnic," "Good Milk to Drink," "My Bath," "Watching the Storm," "Ted and Mary on the Farm," "Mollie's Frog."

Possible songs for July (see pages 216-223): "God's Care," "When I'm Very Happy," "Pitter Patter," "Taking Turns," "Friends at Church."

Possible activities for July: Playing picnic. Play "Getting Ready for Nursery Class." Watching and feeding goldfish. Filling the bird bath.

Introduction

IN THE months of July and August the vacation spirit will be in the air. The nursery leader will make her plans accordingly. Vacations will mean that many of the children will be absent. Perhaps it may even mean that the churches will be closed. Where this happens the leader will send each child his copy of *My Book for Summer, Part IV*. The leader will be sure to sign the letter to the child on the inside cover page and the letter to the parents on page 33 before the books are given to the children on the first Sunday. If the child is not present the first Sunday, the book may be mailed to him, or better, the leader may deliver it in person. The request should accompany the book that the parents look at the pictures with their children and read the stories to them. It is also suggested that the parents read the section for parents carefully.

Summer vacations in some parts of the country will mean a great increase in the attendance of the group because visiting children will be brought to nursery class. There is the difficulty also of the leader and assistants having to plan their vacations so that the children are cared for adequately each Sunday.

During July there are likely to be thunderstorms. Occasionally such a thunderstorm may occur during the church school session. Some of the children will need to be reassured. There may be the opportunities to enjoy the flash of lightning or to play making the noise of thunder with blocks. This play helps to overcome a fear that many adults have not entirely outgrown. If a thunderstorm should occur during the session, the leader should use the suggestions for the third Sunday in July. In connection with appreciation of the storms, the song "Pitter Patter" may be repeated many times.

If appreciation of summer joys is developed, it will be well to include appreciation for rest times. Short rest periods interspersed with play time will help to keep the children happier and more comfortable, but they will need to be encouraged if they are to desire these rest periods.

During the hot weather nursery children are likely to suffer from digestive disorders and attendant physical upsets. These may cause and be caused by emotional disturbances so that, frequently, the leader should provide opportunities for the children to play alone and so to avoid any conflicts that may arise in group play.

It is also necessary for the leader to watch carefully as the children get drinks of water. They should not drink too much at one time nor should the water be too cold.

First Sunday

GETTING READY FOR THE SESSION

The leader will have the cover pages and inside pictures of *My Book for Summer*, Part IV, mounted and ready for use. On the first Sunday she may wish to use the story "Our Picnic" or "Good Milk to Drink." Little children are interested in picnics. To them they mean eating more than anything else. Just a graham cracker or apples or sections of an orange may be a "picnic."

It is not recommended that milk be served in nursery class. Different children may have different grades of milk or milk from different dairies. The leader wishes to safeguard the children from any digestive disorders that might be caused by serving milk to which they are not accustomed.

WHEN THE CHILDREN COME

The watering cans may be placed where the children will notice them as soon as they enter the room. It is likely that there will be continued interest in watering the plants and picking any flowers. There may be a request to take the flowers into the sanctuary. If so, the children may cut and arrange them in a vase, carry them in and place them.

Perhaps it will be cooler in the sanctuary than in their nursery class room and the children will enjoy going in and sitting in the pews and just looking around for three or four minutes.

During the session the leader will remember to plan for a drink of water and a rest period.

Throughout the month, if the weather is unusually warm, the leader will seek the coolest place for the children to play together. This may mean taking the toys outdoors under a tree. On the other hand, the nursery class room may be cooler than the outdoors.

If the leader plans to serve graham crackers, apples, or an orange and call it a picnic, she will decide whether it is better to go out on the church steps or on the lawn or in the nursery class room. While they are eating, she may tell the story.

Emphasis should be on the good times they have with father and mother and other members of the family. The thank-you prayer may include this thought as well as the thank you for food. "Friends at Church" may be sung as a prayer song as the children play that they are having a picnic.

This time of year mothers frequently complain that the children do not enjoy their milk as they did formerly. If the emphasis is on picnics on this first Sunday, the leader may bring in the idea that milk adds to the pleasure of the family picnic.

After they have finished their picnic, the children may play

"Ball Rolling," "Ring Rosy," or "Teeter-Totter" on the lawn or in their class room, or they may be encouraged to follow their own interests and play as individuals until dismissal time. In any case the leader will allow time for the toys to be put away before the parents come for the children.

Second Sunday

GETTING READY FOR THE SESSION

Pictures of children taking a bath or of birds bathing should be ready for this session. There may also be pictures of children at play under the hose or in a tub of water in the yard or in bathing suits down at the seashore or lake or river.

WHEN THE CHILDREN COME

Some of the children may notice the pictures, and conversation will start normally from this interest. Otherwise the leader will call attention to the pictures after the children have played around for a few minutes. Perhaps two or three of them may look at the pictures with the leader at one time. Speak of the joy of playing in the water. Some of the children may tell of the fun they have in a tub of water in the back yard, or they may report putting on sunsuits or bathing suits and splashing in the puddles after a shower or playing under the spray from the lawn hose. Still others may wish to tell about birds they have watched bathing in the puddles. If this is reported, the child who tells it may be willing to show how the bird fluffs out his wings. The leader may play softly and the older children may be interested to fly around hunting an imaginary puddle and pretend to fluff their wings and splash around as the birds do when they take their bath.

The leader will speak of how much the birds need water for bathing and drinking. If there has been rain during the past week, the children may recall this and a prayer may be appropriate. "Thank you, God, for rain. We are glad the birds like rain. We like it too" or "Thank you, God, for the birds. We like to help take care of them."

Conversation will have developed ideas of helping to care for the birds. The children may recall that earlier in the year

they placed bits of string for nests. A few may remember how they scattered crumbs during the cold weather. The leader may say "Now the birds have finished their nests. They can find seeds to eat, also. But we may place pans of water so that they may take a bath." Perhaps some child will ask whether the group may put out some water for the birds. If so, and there is a space where a basin might serve as a bird bath, the leader may have a small basin ready and the children may decide where to place it. Then there will be the fun of filling the new bird bath with water. It is hoped that such a bird bath may be placed so that it can be seen from the nursery class windows. Then the children may watch frequently for the birds and the birds will not be frightened away by having the children too close to them.

There may be no time for a story on this Sunday, or the discussion of birds having a bath or the fun of playing in the water may lead to the story "My Bath." "Thank you, God, for good water. We like to drink water. We like to play in water. We like to have a bath" might be an appropriate prayer. The children may enjoy playing "Teeter-Totter" (see page 219) or "Follow the Leader." If they play "Follow the Leader" they may be led to the drinking fountain to get a drink of water before the rest period and time to go home.

Third Sunday

GETTING READY FOR THE SESSION

The plan for this session is a special one. It may be used on this Sunday or it may be used on a previous one. It may be held for a later date just following a thunderstorm. The leader will use it when it will best help to establish a feeling of security in children who may fear thunderstorms.

Should a severe thunderstorm have occurred on Friday or Saturday, the leader will try to have pictures of lightning mounted and may use the story "Watching the Storm." The song "Pitter Patter" will be an appropriate one.

WHEN THE CHILDREN COME

Should there be a thunderstorm during the session, the leader may plan to have the children listen for the claps of thunder.

Perhaps they may play that they are making the sounds themselves by clapping two large blocks together. When they see the flash of lightning, they may wait a few seconds and then clap for the thunder. The pianist will play so that the music sounds like drops of rain or like claps of thunder, whichever the children wish. If the group has a rhythm band, they may use the drum for the sound of thunder and either shake the bells or tap their fingers on paper for the rain drops. The paper-tapping may be used without a band. The pianist may play music for the thunder shower or may use the music of "Pitter Patter" (see page 223) with a peal of thunder at the end. The song "Pitter Patter" may be sung several times.

It is often possible to divert the attention of children in this way so that the dreaded thunderstorm becomes a fascinating game. If it is raining, be sure that the children have an opportunity to watch from the window. They may watch the rain drops splash in the puddles or against other buildings or against the windowpanes. Some of the children may tell of putting on bathing suits and going out to play if there has been rain during the week.

The leader will seek to make rain and thunder showers joyous summer occasions. She will speak of the rain that falls as washing the streets or cooling the air and giving the birds puddles in which to bathe. She may speak of the leaves on the trees being washed clean by the rain just as cool water washes the dust from the children's own faces and hands.

Perhaps some of the children will wish to take dolls to the window as the little girl in the story took her doll. The following prayers are suggested: "Thank you, God, for rain. We are glad the birds like the rain. We like it too" or "We are glad, dear God, that you care for pets and trees and flowers and for us. Help us to like the bright lightning and the thunder that says 'boom, boom'."

Fourth Sunday

GETTING READY FOR THE SESSION

Pictures for this session will show farm animals and children playing on the farm. There may also be pictures of farm products.

If it is possible to secure small inexpensive farm animals, the leader may have several of each.

WHEN THE CHILDREN COME

If a basin was placed for a bird bath (see suggestions for the first Sunday in July), it is likely that the children will have great interest in filling it and in watching to see whether any birds bathe there again this Sunday. Make plans for this activity.

Conversation about the pictures may lead to the discussion of good food that we get from the farm, vegetables, milk, eggs, apples, and any other products that the children may mention.

Block play may be encouraged as the children build pens for the toy animals, and stables for the horses and cows. They may use toy trucks to haul imaginary vegetables.

Individual and small group play will be encouraged. Again this Sunday there will be the emphasis on drinking good milk.

If a story is told, "Ted and Mary on the Farm" will probably be used. There is likely to be interest in the call of different animals as they appear in the story. Perhaps some of the children will suggest other calls of animals that they may have seen on farms.

The various animal calls may be sung running up and down the scale (see "Leaves Are Falling," page 219).

Some of the children may have gone to visit on a farm and there may be interest in an imaginary trip to one. The leader will encourage conversation and will seek to provide as happy and comfortable a time for the children as possible. The flowers will be watered and the blossoms picked again this Sunday. The children will probably wish a drink of water during the session.

As the children play together the leader may say, "Thank you, God, for happy times at church." After the conversation about the farm an appropriate prayer might be "We are glad to hear about the cows and horses and sheep and chickens on the farm. Thank you, God, for good milk and eggs and vegetables."

Fifth Sunday

GETTING READY FOR THE SESSION

If there is a fish pond or lily pond in the neighborhood of the church and it seems practical to take the children to see the fish, the leader may plan for this activity. She will arrange with the owner to have the children make the visit. Of course, she will not take them if the water in the pool is deep. If it is not possible to visit a fish pond, the leader may provide a small aquarium with just two or three fish that the children may feed and watch as they swim around. Pictures of children feeding the goldfish or watching fish in a pond may be ready for use.

WHEN THE CHILDREN COME

Again the interest of the children, upon arrival, may be in filling the bird bath. The leader should have built on this interest in caring for the birds to help the children to begin to realize that providing water for the birds is one way in which they may help God to care for birds.

If this is a pleasant day, not too warm, the leader may plan to let the children carry some of their toys outside. They may sit together on the church steps and "just talk" provided there is shade.

The aquarium may be taken out on the church steps if the leader wishes, or the children may enjoy it in their own room if that place is cooler. If a story is told, "Mollie's Frog" will probably be used, but it is quite likely that the interest in fish and the questions about them will occupy most of the time.

There will be opportunities for prayer and for singing. If the children choose a game that they wish to play, offer them a choice between "Ring Rosy," "Teeter-Totter," "Getting Ready for Nursery Class" or one of the other games where three or four children play together. Perhaps they will just wish to skip quietly as the pianist plays softly for them. They may skip out for a drink of water.

AUGUST

POSSIBLE MATERIALS AND ACTIVITIES:

Possible stories for August (select from these stories in *My Book for Summer*, Part IV): "Jeanne's Fingers," "When Mother Comes Home," "David's Pet Hen," "The Tea Party," "Jesus and the Birds," "Jesus and the Flowers."

Possible songs for August (see pages 216-223): "Pitter Patter," "When I'm Very Happy," "Friends at Church," "Church Bells," "Taking Turns," "God's Care," "New Chicks."

Possible activities for August: Playing house-keeping. Filling the birdbath. Enjoying sensory experiences through feeling.

Introduction

SUMMER PROBLEMS will continue during August. Attendance may fluctuate and the membership of the group will change as children go and come on vacations. Although the group may be small, meeting with them will be worth while for the leaders can help the children to develop a sense of appreciation for and joy in vacation experiences and continue to guide their social life in the church.

The leader will reread all the materials for the children in *My Book for Summer*, Part IV, and the suggestions for the parents on pages 32 to 48 of the same book. She will decide which of the suggested stories she wishes to use and which may be omitted. She will decide whether she would like to tell the incident of "Jesus and the Birds" or of "Jesus and the

Flowers" during this month or to hold these stories for telling in September.

Thunder storms are likely to continue throughout August. Plans begun in July to help the child to establish a sense of security during storms will be followed throughout the month.

An appreciation of rest times should be continued. Perhaps rest periods may be interspersed with the play periods. The leader will plan for even greater informality than usual during August and September.

Visitors may come to the home or children may go visiting. Provision should be made for these experiences.

The long hours of daylight during the summer months and the heat combine to cause frequent cases of overstimulation on the part of the children. This overstimulation may show itself not only in emotional tenseness and instability but it may also appear as a physical disability. The nursery leader as she senses this problem will seek to provide quiet play for those children who seem to need it.

The problem of satisfying the thirst of the children will continue an acute one.

First Sunday

GETTING READY FOR THE SESSION

The leader may have pictures of children playing outdoors, or vacation fun and of the experiences of sensory play such as handling objects, listening to sea shells, watching animals or watching waves at the shore.

On the first Sunday the leader will decide whether she wishes to stress the sensory experiences such as feeling and looking at the smooth stones, pebbles and shells. If so, she will have these objects ready for the children.

WHEN THE CHILDREN COME

Although there will be greater informality than usual during the extreme heat of summer, the children will expect to follow much the same plan that they have followed throughout the year. The leader will encourage their choice of activity. She

may guide their interest toward the pictures or objects for them to examine. If there is a large shell, the children may hold it against their ears to hear the roar of the ocean.

The children may enjoy hearing the story "Jeanne's Fingers." They will find pleasure in moving their fingers as Jeanne did. Lack of muscular control makes it difficult for them to use complicated finger plays, but this simple play will be enjoyed by them. They may request the story on following Sundays for the pleasure of playing with their hands as Jeanne did with hers.

Conversation may be guided into the ways hands may be helpful. The children may suggest that they put away toys with their hands and they arrange flowers with their hands.

Further sensory experiences may be included as from the feel of green grass and of sand and perhaps the feel of water. Some of the children may tell about going barefooted and feeling the grass or sand or water with their feet.

There may be continued interest in the care of the garden or flower box and in providing water for the bird bath. Doll play and block building may be encouraged.

The children may find great satisfaction in just listening to the music. The pianist may play any of the familiar songs and the children listen as they play around the room or may go over to the piano to listen to the music or perhaps to sing the familiar songs.

Some of the children may have returned from their vacations. Let them tell where they have been and some of the good times they have had. This should provide opportunities for a thank-you prayer. Other children will talk about their plans to go on a vacation. There will be the fun of playing that they are packing their bags and getting on the train or riding in an automobile.

The children who stay at home as well as those who are on vacations may have contributions to group conversation as they tell of the good times they have in their own yards or playing with father and mother or the other children. All prayer opportunities will be recognized and used by the leader.

Second Sunday

GETTING READY FOR THE SESSION

The leader will decide whether to use the story "When Mother Comes Home" or "Jesus and the Birds" or "Jesus and the Flowers" or whether there shall be no story on this Sunday. Her selection of pictures will be planned upon the emphasis she hopes to develop.

WHEN THE CHILDREN COME

It may be well to give frequent opportunities during the summer for the children to follow their own interests without teacher suggestion unless there are new members in the group who have not been accustomed to informal procedure and may need guidance from the leader.

The pianist may play softly throughout the session. Sometimes she may sing some of the familiar songs. Those children who care to do so will sing with her. "Come and Rest" may be used as a signal for a rest period. "When I'm Very Happy," "Taking Turns," "Friends at Church," "God's Care," "Pitter Patter" and "Snow, Snow, Snow" with the substitution of appropriate words will provide opportunities for songs with which the children would be quite familiar.

If the leader decides to use the story "When Mother Comes Home," she may wish to suggest housekeeping play. One child or leader may be the mother who will go away for the day. Perhaps she will go shopping or she may go to Aunt Mary's. She will suggest to the child certain ways that he may help her while she is away. They might include: reminding him to play nicely with the other children; to put away his toys after he has finished playing; to take his rest as usual; to eat his lunch when it is prepared.

Whenever the story of "Jesus and the Flowers" or "Jesus and the Birds" is the one selected, there will be the added emphasis of caring for the garden and providing water for the bird bath. If there are no longer flowers in the garden, the leader may wish to have a bouquet on the Sunday that she talks about "Jesus and the Flowers." Once again the children may enjoy the sensory experience of matching colors of their

dresses, suits, hair ribbons, and socks with the flowers. They may wish to carry the flowers into the sanctuary. The leader will decide whether she wishes to arrange with the organist to play one of the familiar songs while the children are in the sanctuary. She will use all opportunities for brief prayer.

Third Sunday

GETTING READY FOR THE SESSION

If this is a rainy Sunday or if there has been a recent thunder storm, the leader may wish to repeat the story "Watching the Storm" and use the song "Pitter Patter."

There is value in frequent repetition of stories that the children enjoy. No emphasis is *learned* unless there is frequent opportunity for repetition and practice of the activities.

WHEN THE CHILDREN COME

If there are some children present who were absent during July, the leader may wish to repeat some of the other stories that were used that month. If "David's Pet Hen" is the story that is used this session, there will be pictures of hens, roosters and baby chicks. The children may tell of the pets they have at home.

As the children talk about their pets it is likely that some will speak of toy cats or dogs as real pets. The leader will encourage the children to stroke any toy pets in the nursery class very gently. Many leaders prefer the toy to the real pet in the church school group, since some children are allergic to the animals. Then, too, little children do not realize that they are cruel to pets when they squeeze or maul them. The emphasis on pets may lead to the telling of the story.

The children may be interested in the good egg David had for breakfast. They may tell about the good egg they had for breakfast. It will be quite appropriate to sing the scale using the words "Cluck, cluck, cluck" for the mother hen and "Peep, peep, peep" for the baby chick and "Cockle-doodle-doo" for the daddy rooster. They may also wish to sing "New Chicks." Again this Sunday the children may prefer to follow their own interests and perhaps to hear music. If they wish,

they may play "Ring Rosy" or "Teeter-Totter," or other games may be suggested for their choice.

Fourth Sunday

GETTING READY FOR THE SESSION

The stones, shells and pebbles again may be arranged for the children to feel. Pictures should be on the screen or table. These may include pictures of children having tea parties, of children on vacation, of storms, or the Bible pictures from the third cover page of *My Book for Spring*, Part III, and *My Book for Summer*, Part IV.

WHEN THE CHILDREN COME

Again the leader may follow the interests of the children to the point of not suggesting activities for them. She will encourage them to plan for themselves by arranging pictures, objects and interest centers so that they will suggest activities to the children.

Perhaps some child will ask to help fill the bird bath. If it is already filled, the child should be encouraged to tell about any birds they have seen taking sand baths or splashing in the water. Another may request the pleasure of arranging any flowers that are brought for the room. If the story "The Tea Party" is told, the leader may plan for the children to have either a tea party with animal crackers or apples or just play tea party with the dolls. If food is served, there will, of course, be an opportunity for a thank-you prayer.

If the housekeeping play is followed, one child might be the grocer. Another child might go to the grocery store and buy whatever they suggest for the tea party, and the dolls and children may pretend to eat.

If there have been thunder storms this week, "Watching the Storm" may be the story the leader will wish to use and "Pitter Patter" may be sung, or the leader may decide to use one of the Bible stories on this Sunday. If she wishes, she may repeat one of the Bible stories from a previous quarter (see

My Book, Parts I, II, and III). Again there should be opportunity for the children to share vacation experiences or to play that they are going away for a vacation or that others are coming to visit them. The activities and interests of the children will provide opportunities that the leader will use for brief prayers.

SEPTEMBER

POSSIBLE MATERIALS AND ACTIVITIES:

Possible stories for September (select from these stories in *My Book for Summer*, Part IV): "Hello Daddy," "Big Enough to Help," "Hello Grandmother," "The Big Children's Party," "Jesus and the Birds," "Jesus and the Flowers."

Possible songs for September (see pages 216-223): "When I'm Very Happy," "Taking Turns," "Friends at Church," "God's Care," "Pitter Patter."

Possible activities for September: Being measured. Housekeeping play. Visiting the kindergarten room (for the older children). Taking a walk. Arranging flowers.

Introduction

THREE will be a continuation of irregular attendance during September, but the greatest problem for most nursery workers is that of promotion. The church schools in which the children are promoted when they reach their fourth birthday will probably not advance children between June and September even if they do reach their fourth birthdays during these months. The irregular attendance of the children and the program that is likely to be somewhat disrupted in both the nursery and kindergarten usually makes it advisable not to risk the emotional strain of having children promoted during summer months.

The leader will read suggestions for promotion on pages 179-183 and will decide on the procedures for her own group.

Suggestions are included this month for possible procedures that look toward the promotion of several of the children from nursery class to kindergarten. It is likely that any children who will be four years old in October will be included among those who have already reached their fourth birthday and will be promoted at this time.

The leader will seek to provide a natural, normal and calm plan of promotion. She will avoid all exploitation of the children. That is, there will be no "promotion exercises" in which the nursery children appear with older groups or before the school assembly. Then, too, the leader will seek to help the children who are not to be promoted to realize that they are growing bigger, that they are to continue to be the helpers in the nursery class after the older girls and boys have gone to the kindergarten. The leader may also emphasize that the three-year-olds are big enough to help at home. They may put away their own toys. They may come quickly when mother and daddy call them. In this way she will guard against making promotion such a desired goal that discontent would be felt by those who are not being promoted.

Another question for consideration this month is that of the children whose older brothers and sisters or whose playmates in the neighborhood go to school. The leader will constantly remember that school for the older members of the family will be a general topic of conversation. Frequently this causes the nursery class child to feel left out of an interesting activity. Although this is a splendid opportunity to help the little child to realize that there are certain things he cannot do until he is older, nevertheless we do not wish him to feel too neglected when the older children get new clothes, new books, pencils, tablets, and other fascinating equipment to start to school. The leader may place the emphasis on *knowing* these girls and boys, brothers and sisters, or neighbors who are big enough to go to school. She may speak about watching the children and waving goodby in the morning and planning to meet them when they come back in the afternoon.

*First Sunday***GETTING READY FOR THE SESSION**

The room will be arranged as usual. Pictures of fathers and mothers and children may be ready for the children's use. If the leader considers it practical, the fathers may be invited to come to the group a few minutes before dismissal time. If this plan is developed, the leader will arrange for opportunities to help the children think of pleasant things to do while daddy comes to visit, or they may plan what they wish to show him or perhaps sing some of their songs together so that they can sing one or two songs for daddy.

WHEN THE CHILDREN COME

When the children arrive, they may be encouraged to follow their own interests. If any shy ones come who have been away on vacations, the leader will help them to feel adjusted in the group situation. She may suggest that they look at the pictures or play with the toys that she knows have held special interest for these children during the year. The pianist may play the songs used throughout the year. Any of the children who are interested in singing will probably go to the piano and sing with her. Some may wish just to sit and listen. Others will follow their own interests but probably will enjoy hearing the music.

The leader may guide conversation about what fathers do, where they work and times when the child has visited father at work. Or the children may tell about the ways that they help daddy at home and the leader will mention ways in which different children have been helpful in nursery class. Perhaps there may be interest in some of the small groups in playing house, and the children may take turns in being the daddy. The other children will straighten the house and prepare the meal and perhaps pack daddy's lunch.

The "Snow" song with the substitution of the word fathers or daddies may be sung as well as any of the other songs the children request. The prayer might be "Thank you, God, for fathers and mothers. We are so glad boys and girls can help

fathers and mothers at home" or "Thank you, God, for fathers. Help us to remember to help father and mother at home."

If a story is told, "Hello Daddy" may be used. If the leader has planned for the fathers to visit, time should be allowed for the children to suggest what they would like to show daddy when he comes. If there are any flowers in the children's flower garden or if the leader has flowers that she has taken to the group on this Sunday, the children may be encouraged to take a flower when daddy comes in and give it to him to wear. Encourage the children to lead their fathers around the room and show them the special toy in which they are most interested. Bob may show the color cone, Ruth the doll, Ted the blocks. This will be splendid so long as the children are encouraged to feel it a natural situation.

If the fathers of some of the children are not at church, it may be that a grandfather or the minister or church school superintendent or some other friendly man may be willing to enter into the plan with the leader and let the nursery class children show him around the nursery class room.

Second Sunday

GETTING READY FOR THE SESSION

In preparation for this week the nursery leader should invite the kindergarten superintendent into the group for a brief visit in order that she may meet the children who are to be promoted and so that the children may see her and begin to recognize her as a friend. The nursery leader should know when to expect the kindergarten leader and should plan for her visit.

WHEN THE CHILDREN COME

After the children have started their play, the leader may go from group to group. She may mention the fact that Miss _____ will be in to visit today. Soon the girls and boys who are going into the kindergarten will know Miss _____ very well. They will play with her and she will tell them stories and sing with them in the kindergarten. When she comes to visit

today, it will be nice to invite her to play here in the nursery class.

The leader will try to provide an opportunity for the kindergarten superintendent to be introduced informally to each of the children who are to be promoted to the kindergarten. "Miss Smith, this is Jeanne and this is Helen. They are taking their little girl to the store with them. This is Billie and this is Joe, Miss Smith. They have built a road for their automobiles." Such an informal introduction should help the children to remember the name of the new leader and to feel a little more at home when they go into the new group.

Perhaps the children who are to be promoted may play the "Get Acquainted Game" with the kindergarten superintendent. In this way she would learn the names of the children, but it is more likely that the children will be shy and that the kindergarten superintendent would have happier experiences with them if she plays "Ball Rolling" or "Getting Ready for Nursery Class" or a similar game. If some of the children already know this person, it will be much easier for the others to become acquainted. Encourage any friendly courtesies that the children may extend. Probably she can be with the group only a few minutes, but she may invite the older children to come visit the kindergarten on the following Sunday.

The story, "Big Enough to Help," may be used for this session. Emphasis may be placed on being big enough to do certain things. Harry is big enough to hang his hat on the hook. Ruth is big enough to remember to put away her toys after she has used them. Arda is big enough to put on her own shoes and tie them. Allan is big enough to put on his rubbers. Mary and Alice and Bob and Jim are big enough to play together nicely.

Quite likely several of the children will wish to show how tall they are. Take time for them to measure their height. They may even wish to compare the size of their feet. The leader may fasten a piece of paper on the wall and mark the heights of the different children.

There may be skipping or a game of "Ring Rosy" or "Teeter-Totter" or any other game in which the children are interested. Probably the rest periods will need to be continued. The leader

will decide whether or not the group should go for a drink of water as they did during the summer.

Third Sunday

GETTING READY FOR THE SESSION

The leader will plan to have several of the favorite pictures ready for use this Sunday. Some may be placed on the screen or dado. Some may be on the table with the books so that the children can see them and handle them.

A toy telephone holds great interest for little children, but many leaders hesitate to include it in their equipment because it is a toy that must be held close to the mouth. If there is a toy telephone in the nursery class, it should be sterilized ready for use this Sunday. Otherwise, the leader may make a telephone taking two large spools and tying a cord to each. The children can hold the spool so that they will play that they are talking in one end while listening in the other end. Or a telephone may be made from two small tin cans that have been opened so that there are no sharp or rough edges. A string may be attached to each can through a small hole pierced in the bottom. This makes an admirable telephone either painted or left unpainted. At least four feet of string should extend between the spools or cans.

WHEN THE CHILDREN COME

The pianist may play softly as the children arrive. As the leader greets each child, she encourages him to find the interest he wishes. She may call attention to the telephone and encourage the children to carry on conversations. The story "Hello Grandmother" may be told early in the session so that the children may have time to play "telephone" to grandmother.

If arrangements have been made for the children who are to be promoted to the kindergarten to visit in the kindergarten room, they may go for their visit while the younger children continue to play with the telephone or with any of the other toys in the nursery class. Perhaps the children who go into the kindergarten will play "Ring Rosy" or roll the ball. The leader may plan to take the younger children for a walk while the

older children with another of the leaders have gone to kindergarten to visit. These younger children will soon be the leaders of the group. The nursery class leader often marvels at their ability to show initiative. This is especially true after the older members of the group have been promoted.

After the older children have returned, the leader should mention the fact that some of the other girls and boys are three years old now. They are big enough to play together and to sing. They will stay in nursery class to help the little new boys and girls to learn to sing and to show the new girls and boys how to play with the dolls and blocks and balls and other toys.

It is important that the leader help the children who are not ready to be promoted to feel that they have an especial place in the nursery class even though the older children are to be promoted.

The leader will continue the conversation about growing bigger and being better able to care for oneself, of ways to help mother and daddy at home and of the ways in which they may play with older and younger brothers and sisters. There probably will be several opportunities for prayer and several requests to sing some of the favorite songs during this informal conversation.

Fourth Sunday

GETTING READY FOR THE SESSION

During the week the leaders will prepare identification tags for each child who is to be promoted (see page 182).

If the school does not provide promotion certificates, the leader may either secure these from a publishing house or she may make a simple attractive promotion card for each child. If possible, there should be flowers for the children to arrange. Perhaps dahlias or some other early fall flowers will be available.

The leaders will avoid overexcitement. The greater the amount of individual play the better the experience will be for the children.

WHEN THE CHILDREN COME

The pianist may play softly as the children come. She probably will continue to play familiar music during most of the session. A child or a group of children may request that she sing to them, or they may show interest in singing. The children may enjoy looking at the favorite pictures just as they did on the previous Sunday. They may wish to select some and talk about them. Perhaps they can recall the story or they may ask that a favorite story be told.

The leader will decide whether to tell "The Big Children's Party" to the entire group or to tell this story to the older children, and the story of "Jesus and the Flowers" or "Jesus and the Birds" to the younger children who will remain in the nursery class after the others have gone to the kindergarten. It is likely that there will be no story on this Sunday.

All the children may be taken for a walk. The leaders who go with the children to the kindergarten will see that this group receive their promotion certificates or cards before they go for their walk. They may walk around to look at the flower garden again and to talk together about planting the seeds and watching the flowers grow. They may stop to look at the entrance to the other part of the church or may even sit on the church steps and talk for a minute or two. Then they may be led to the door through which they will enter the kindergarten room in the future. This plan provides for their first actual entrance on promotion Sunday to be through the door that they will use while they are in that department. The kindergarten superintendent will be ready to greet each child. This can be done easily by means of the identification tags.

The younger children may also go for a walk but they will take a different direction. Or they may have remained in the nursery class room playing together with the leaders who have stayed with them. There will be references to the way in which these boys and girls (mention their names) are to be the helpers. They will help to make the new girls and boys feel happy. Everything possible should be done to give these children the feeling that they, also, have been considered in the plans and that the leader has not limited her attention to the older children who are being promoted.

These younger children may not be so familiar with the songs as were the children who have just been promoted. There may be an opportunity while the children are playing for the leader to go from group to group and sing one or two of the familiar songs as the pianist plays them.

The various activities suggested should provide prayer opportunities that the leader will recognize and use. If it seems wise, there may be a short story period for several small groups of two or three children, or as they examine the pictures, stories may be told the children, upon request. Every effort will be made to make this a happy occasion for the three-year-olds who are now the leaders in the nursery class.

WE LOOK AT THE THREE-YEAR-OLD

WHAT may nursery class leaders expect to find when they study the three-year-old child? First, they need to remember that there is no "average" child. Adults speak of an average child, but each child is an individual. Each child's physical development, mental development, social development and religious development will be according to that child's own rhythm of growth. Progress in each of these areas will be largely dependent upon his environment. We cannot expect a child to be socially alert at the age of three if these three years have been spent without companionship of other children and with no one except his parents with whom to play and talk.

A careful study of several thousand children by pediatricians, psychologists, and psychiatrists have helped to give a fairly accurate picture of what might be called an average or normal child and what may be expected of him at the age of three years.

Physical Development

At two years of age the normal child is slightly more than half the average stature that he will be as an adult. By four years he has doubled his birth stature. The three-year-old is between 32 and 40 inches tall and weighs between 25 and 36 pounds. The child's legs are still short in proportion to his total height. As he goes up steps he generally uses alternate steps in an adult manner. However, he often goes as a two-year-old, one foot at a time. The three-year-old can stand on one foot. He can hop but he is rarely able to skip until he has reached the age of four or five. He is still continuing his day-time nap. His toilet habits are well established and he can care for himself at the toilet if his clothing is not too complicated. He can wash and dry his own hands, do much towards dressing and undressing himself, and can use a handkerchief.

At the table he can pour milk from the pitcher to his glass or cup. The smaller size cup is preferable to a full size glass for his use. He can pass a plate of cookies without accident. But his muscular control is not complete. He lacks sufficient co-ordination for dependable use of smaller muscles. This is one reason scissors and crayons are not recommended for nursery classes.

Mental Growth

Mentally, the three-year-old has advanced with equal speed. His vocabulary should be about nine hundred words. He talks in sentences and his sentences are sometimes quite long ones. He has an increasing fund of information, and the tendency to baby talk has practically disappeared. The three-year-old is often able to give his home address as well as his full name. He sings, but usually this singing is considerably off key. Occasionally a three-year-old can carry the tune well.

The three-year-old may remember from week to week, even over a period of months, but he cannot be depended upon to remember. He frequently amazes the nursery leader with references to activities of months previous, but the leader must not count on this recall.

Social Growth

Socially, the three-year-old has changed greatly within a few months. He is now ready for very simple group play with small groups of three or four children. Such group play includes rolling a ball, playing "Ring Rosy" or "Getting Ready for Nursery Class" (see page 200). This frequent play with other children is unlike social co-operation in play that will follow within a year or two. He is likely to play as an individual. He has an interest in others, but there will be a constant shifting of the children in the group. A game of "Ring Rosy" may start with four children, continue over a period of a few minutes, take eight or ten other children into the group, end with four children but an entirely different group from the four who started the game.

Three-year-olds carry on conversations with one another. They recognize the rights of others and with guidance learn

to share, take turns and await their turns. There is some dramatic play such as keeping house, playing policeman, and so on. But again the housekeeping play may start with a mother and two children and end with two fathers and a child but a group of entirely different individuals. There is nothing unusual in this to children. Their play goes on almost as an uninterrupted bit of dramatic interest but the emphasis changes and the players change.

Leadership tendencies are noticeable among three-year-olds. There are certain to be some children who show great leadership ability. Occasionally aggressiveness is noticeable to the point of needing careful guidance to safeguard the more retiring children in the group. Nursery leaders should watch themselves carefully and check often to see that all the children in the group have an equal opportunity and receive a just share of individual attention. The nursery leader will remind herself that nursery class work is fundamentally work with individual children. The nursery leader may have favorites, but *she must be careful never to show favoritism toward any child.*

Emotional Growth

The emotional development of the three-year-old has kept pace with his physical, mental and social growth. He is gaining in emotional control. At two years of age, it was a case of "out of sight, out of mind." The child might scream violently when his mother left him with anyone, but once his attention was diverted he became interested in activities and appeared to forget all about his mother until he caught sight of her again. The three-year-old reacts in an entirely different way. He may stage a temper tantrum to gain attention, but he will rarely repeat this attempt at control of a situation more than two or three times if it does not gain him his own way.

Quarrels among three-year-olds are frequent, but they are usually settled by the children themselves if adults refrain from interference. This is one place where the leader must watch carefully in order that she may be fair. A frequent question heard in a nursery class group is "Who had it first?" when two children are claiming the same toy. An alert three-year-old may even greet the leader with the exclamation, "I had it

first! I had it first!" if she approaches the two children to try to settle the dispute. Unless the leader *knows* who had it first, the child may use this means of escape every time he decides to take a toy from another child. This may not be a false claim so far as the child is concerned. He probably has no sense of the right or wrong involved. He does not remember "who had it first." It is merely a formula that always seems to work with this adult.

Records show that there are more fears at this age than at either younger or older age levels. There probably are several reasons for these fears. The child is mingling with a larger number of persons than formerly. His imagination is developing. He is away from the shelter of home more than he was at a younger age. He hears a larger number of older children talking, and these children may tell him tales that will arouse fear. The communicable quality of fear must be recognized. It is readily learned. If adults evidence fear, even though they attempt to hide this fear from the children, it undoubtedly will be "caught." The child is more able to interpret what he may hear over the radio or the tones of voice associated with adults. At a later age he can use discrimination that he does not have when three years old.

Negativism and resistance to authority have increased at the age of three just as his feeling of independence has increased. Probably this negativism is one phase of asserting independence.

The three-year-old child plays hard. Often he becomes overfatigued from the intensity of his play. This necessitates watchfulness on the part of the leader in order that he may be safeguarded from undue fatigue that leads to cross, irritable behavior.

Religious Development

What religious development may be expected of the three-year-old? So far as theological concepts are concerned, there will be practically none. He may have learned to address his prayers to "God." He may have heard a few stories about Jesus, but for the three-year-old, these are only words with practically no meaning. He may even ask questions that adults find difficult to answer, because they usually seek to answer the

little child's questions dealing with religious concepts in terms of adult understanding of religion instead of the simple, concise, childlike statement the three-year-old requires.

As the parents, the nursery leaders and other persons with whom he associates interpret Christian living through their close associations with him, the little child learns Christian ways of living. He can learn only what he sees exemplified by those whose lives touch his.

Gradually, as he sees his family pause to recognize God in the thanks at mealtime, and, as they pray with him at other times, the little child senses God as Creator, but this is a reaching out toward God, not an understanding of God. It is communicated by group life, not by words. Words merely stand for what a person has experienced. Religiously this child is just beginning.

Through Christian living in the home and nursery class, religion is "caught." True religion cannot be taught through telling. Mere cant, repetition of words or phrases, may be learned "parrot-like," from the age of language development on through life. But Christlike living, Christian "experiences" are growing experiences. As the little child lives with Christian persons his standards for Christian living are formed. An understanding and interpretation of these standards will not come until much later.

As the child learns what is acceptable conduct toward others, what is expected from him in relation to others in the home, and in regard to his own behavior, he is learning Christian consideration for others, Christian controls for himself. This is the foundation of true religious development for early childhood. The Christian home in which consistent standards of living are established undergirds the little child's security.

"To Be Expected" Behavior of Three-Year-Olds

It cannot be expected that nursery class children will be stable emotionally. Frequently, a child who has appeared to be well-adjusted, will develop antisocial or some other not-expected type of behavior that astounds the leaders. Sometimes cause for his unexpected behavior may be traced to recent illness or physical readjustments in the family, such as moving,

having visitors, a new boarder who comes into the home, relatives who have moved in, or an emotional upset due to the birth of a new baby.

Often a child whose language ability is well developed, will revert to baby talk after a new brother or sister has come into the home. This may also be the cause of other infantile behavior. A child may even slip back in toilet habits. Illness is another cause of similar difficulties with the child. A long illness may necessitate much reteaching, but patience and perseverance will help to overcome the difficulty and to re-establish what the mother and teacher may have thought were already habitual good forms of behavior.

THE WELL-ADJUSTED CHILD

What does the nursery class leader mean when she speaks of Ardash as being a well-adjusted child?

The nursery class door opened. Ardash came in with a smile. She came across the room and in answer to the leader's "Good morning, Ardash. I am so glad to see you this morning," she smiled and said, "Hello." Then as she began to take off her own wraps she announced, "Dorothy hasn't any tooth in the front." (Dorothy the seven-year-old sister had been a former member of the nursery class.) "It came out yesterday. She looks so funny!"

The teacher laughed with Ardash and then said, "Dorothy is growing up. She is a big girl. Big girls do lose their teeth, but she will get another tooth."

"I know," said Ardash. "Mother says she will get another tooth." By this time the wraps were hung and Ardash was ready for play. She looked around the room and said, "I think I will play with Sally and Tom this morning." Sally and Tom were two of the favorite dolls.

Just then Janet and Bobby and Charles came into the nursery class room. Ardash looked at them, smiled and said "Hello," but continued her play. After the other children had taken off their wraps, Charles went over and watched Ardash with the dolls and decided that he would play with them also. He picked up Tom. Ardash said, "You play with Tom, I'll play with Sally."

But in a few minutes Charles decided to take Sally also. Ardath was ready to assert her own rights. Both children were insistent, but they settled it for themselves without interference from the leader, and each happily pursued his own interest. Other children joined the group, and, in a little while Ardath left the dolls and went to the slide, where she played with two or three other children. A little later she built blocks with Tommy and Janet.

The pianist had been playing for several minutes when Ardath left her block building, went over close to the piano, stood watching, and then said, "I like that song. Will you play it again?"

"Would you like to sing it?" asked the pianist.

"Yes," said Ardath.

One or two other children joined the group at the piano. Together they sang, "Taking Turns," and "When I'm Very Happy." Later Ardath showed an interest in several pictures on the dado, and asked one of the leaders about the pictures. She listened to the story and then went back to play "Ring Rosy" with a small group near the piano.

Ardath was interested in everything that happened. She was well-adjusted socially and could meet the other children and the leaders. There was no emotional upset when she came into the room or when there was a disagreement about the doll. She had entered the nursery class just before she was three years old. Her mother had brought her into the class for several Sundays. Then one Sunday, as they entered the church door, Ardath had said, "You wait here. I can go to my room by myself." The wise mother co-operated with the little girl, who was big enough to begin to assert her own independence.

It is not unusual to find a nursery class in which the majority of the children seem well-adjusted. But it is likely that some members of the group had to learn emotional control and social development. The child who is well-adjusted does not just "happen" to be so. There may have been careful study on the part of the parent, and, perhaps, on the part of the parent and the leader, both of whom co-operated to help him gain this desired behavior.

It is true that some children seem to be naturally calm and not easily disturbed. For these children adjustment in a group

is much less difficult than for the tense, high strung, emotional child whose mother or father has clung to him. They hesitate to give up his babyhood. They fear someone in the nursery class may take the place of the parent in their child's life. No child can become adjusted when the parent clings to him emotionally. Apron strings must be cut.

THE CHILD WHO IS PRECOCIOUS

In every nursery group, there are likely to be one or two precocious children. These children may be advanced mentally. Often they are equally advanced in other phases of their development, but just as often the precocious child is inclined to be selfish and in other ways not socially equal to his peers. Usually the precocious child has a vocabulary that excels that of other children in the group.

Paul was such a precocious child. He had made several plane trips between Boston and the mid-western city in which he lived. His description of the parts of the plane and of the exciting incidents of a trip were of great interest to the leaders of the group, but seemed to bore the other children. Bernice, another precocious three-year-old, enjoyed playing that she was traveling on the train. She had never been in an airplane nor had she had any overnight trips on the train, but her description of the pullman and the making of a berth were most accurate. One day, as she was sitting on the floor playing with a toy plane, she explained to the leader who was standing near. "You know the planes are guided by a beam. This is similar to remote control, and when an airplane comes to the landing field the beam directs it so that the plane knows the way to turn and how to reach the field safely. At night a ray of light guides the plane to a safe landing."

The leader was amazed at the description the child had given her. She knew that Bernice's father talked with her and gave her scientific answers to her questions. Usually it seems better to answer a little child's questions in a simple way with a vocabulary within their understanding. Bernice had memorized the father's description, but it is likely that she had no idea of the meaning of beam and remote control. She was

merely using the father's terms in a parrot-like manner to impress adults.

THE CHILD WHO IS AGGRESSIVE

Practically every group of nursery children have some aggressive members. This characteristic is not troublesome until it interferes with the happiness or freedom of the other children.

Danny was rather large for his age. Whatever he wished he snatched from another child. If he could not gain his desires immediately, he would find other ways of getting what he wished. Frequently he would sidle up to the child. Soon there would be a piercing scream. Danny would look towards the leader in amazement, an absolutely blank expression on his face. The leader knew that he had pinched another child to get what he wanted.

He wished to do everything the other children did and to do it first, but he would not co-operate with other children and he shared under protest. It became necessary to assign one leader to Danny. This person followed the child constantly without his knowledge in order to safeguard the rights of the other children and to protect them physically. It took months of careful guidance before the leaders noticed any improvement in Danny's behavior.

During this time Danny's mother was greatly disturbed because of his spirit of non-co-operation in the home. Danny and his sister, who was eight years older than he, could not agree in anything. The home was constantly in a turmoil because of the two children. Danny's aggressiveness changed to that of bullying the other children. The leader watched for each sign of improvement and reported it to the mother. There was close co-operation between the home and the nursery class leader. Certain guards were set up for the child. It was suggested that the older sister cease teasing Danny and that she stop finding fault with everything that he did. The parents were advised to pay a little less attention to the child's faults and to begin praising improvements in behavior.

Several times after his outbursts of unsociable behavior toward other children, the leader suggested to Danny that he

come rest for a while. She would sit near him and talk to the child quietly about some pleasant topic of interest. Sometimes they merely sat near one another. The leader would smile at him occasionally but nothing would be said. Then of his own accord, Danny began going over to the side of the room to sit for a few minutes. Sometimes he would pick up a book and look at it. One Sunday Danny's mother came into the group and found him sitting alone. She thought he was there for punishment. When she questioned him, he looked at her in surprise and said, "I didn't do a thing. I'm just resting." This was true. The "resting" carried over to the home. Gradually there was a change in the child. He became less aggressive. The bully-type of behavior disappeared entirely. By the time Danny was four years old, he was ready for kindergarten, and the leader felt that he had made greater adjustments during the nursery class period than any other child in the group.

Shirley's aggressiveness took the form of selfishness. She dominated the situation, lined two or three children in a row and made them do as she said. At other times she would gather all the toys together and refuse to share them with anyone. On several occasions she took them behind the piano and lay on top of them so that the other children could not get them. Again she would appear to be most co-operative for several Sundays.

Martha was also aggressive, but in a socially acceptable way. She managed to have other children interested in the particular activity that she was pursuing at that time. It might be that she wished to play on the slide. She would enlist the interest of two or three other children, persuade them to slide and there would be a delightful time as the children went up and down the slide. But Martha always had more turns than any of the others. She managed to get in ahead of Billy and then she would follow Ruth and have another turn before Herbert had come down. She always explained that it was her turn and managed the children in such a way that none of them resented her aggressiveness.

In fact, the leaders did not realize fully what was happening until a father took moving pictures of the group one Sunday. These pictures showed Martha in the center of every activity. When the children were on the slide Martha never waited her

turn but pushed in. A picture of block building showed Martha standing close to the camera conscious of the fact that she was the center of attention. Later, it showed her insisting that the children build in a certain way, which they did, and then proudly Martha added the last block herself. In a game of Ring Rosy as shown by the moving picture, Martha was always the first child to fall and usually the last to get up.

SHYNESS—A HANDICAP

The child who is shy suffers untold miseries. Frequently he wants to enter group activities. He wishes to play as the other children play. He longs to roll a ball or cuddle a doll or build with the blocks, but he cannot get away from himself.

Frances was unusually shy. She watched activities from the extreme corner of the room. The leader tried not to force her, but was always near to be friendly, to smile or to hand a toy or book. Usually Frances did not take them. She was too bashful to reach out to get them. The leader would occasionally try to take her hand hoping that establishment of a sense of security would help to overcome the shyness. Her hand was cold and clammy. Yet Frances went home each Sunday and told of the many activities that she had enjoyed in nursery class. Her pleasure was purely vicarious, but the mother had reports of everything that had happened in the group. Frances sang all of the songs the other children sang. What is more, she really knew the words and carried the tune although she never sang a word in nursery class. She called each child by name and told of the interests that had been followed by each in the group. When she entered the nursery class room, she would drag back holding her father's hand. There was never any remonstrance at staying. She enjoyed being in the group but could not make herself enter into the activities. For the first nine months that she was in nursery class, Frances never spoke to any leader.

The leaders continued to seek ways to help this shy little girl. One Sunday the leader took her hand, led her to a table and sat down with her. The leader said nothing, but opened a new book and slowly turned the pages. Frances looked at the pictures, pointed to one and said "Kitty." The following Sun-

day Frances carried the book to the leader, pointed to the picture again and said, "Kitty." Nine months of patient waiting, study, thoughtful planning, brought reward. Gradually Frances took her place as a co-operative member of the group. She was still shy when promoted to the kindergarten, but a decided improvement had been made.

THE CHILD WHO IS RETIRING

Some children are not shy to the extent of non-co-operation but they are retiring. Such a child may be perfectly willing to enter into an activity, and may contribute to the small group of which he is a member, after he has been invited into that group.

Henry was interested in everything that went on in nursery class. But frequently he waited at one side of the room, until the leader suggested several activities from which he might choose. Often a retiring child is a potential leader. Sometimes he needs to have confidence established in his own ability. Perhaps he has been dominated by older brothers or sisters, or strictly disciplined at home, or he may have been overprotected and not given an opportunity to express his own desires.

A retiring child may be an example of the "good" child of a generation ago. He may cause no trouble, but he is not developing in a normal way. Or he may be perfectly co-operative, when he knows that he is included in a group plan or requested to do something individually, but just keeps in the background unless especially singled out.

The leader will be alert to the needs of the retiring child and will seek to help him to find joy in happy experiences, both with small groups, and alone.

DEPENDENCY

Ellen and her mother came into the nursery class room. Mother took off Ellen's gloves, then her coat and hat and leggings. Ellen might just as well have been a rag doll so far as her interest or ability to do anything for herself was concerned.

The nursery leader suggested to the mother that Ellen was a big three-year-old girl, large enough to come to nursery class and so old enough to take off her own wraps. The mother

replied, "Oh, I always take off Ellen's wraps. After all, children are babies for such a short time and I like doing things for Ellen." It was several months before the mother would willingly let the child do for herself.

A month after she had entered nursery class, Ellen was able to put on her hat and coat to go out and plant seeds. At first the child stood and waited while the other children put on their wraps. She had to be urged to put on her hat, then she had to be urged to take the coat from the hanger and put one arm into the sleeve. It was a gradual process and the leaders did not hurry the child nor compel her to do too much for herself. They realized that she had been completely dependent on others all of her life, but the least evidence of interest in doing for herself was praised. She was encouraged to try again. Gradually an interest in doing for herself seemed to spring up within the child. Over and over she was heard to say, "I can do it myself. I can do it myself. Let me do it myself." This was true with activities within the group as well as in caring for herself. She found joy in accomplishment.

Then there is the child who is dependent upon his mother to think for him. Harry was one month less than three years of age when he entered the nursery group. His mother insisted that the child probably would be unhappy if she did not stay with him for the first few Sundays. The nursery leader explained that they were always glad to have the parents for a Sunday or two, but usually the child made better adjustment and advanced as a member of the group more rapidly when alone.

It was immediately evident that Harry could make little progress if his mother stood by. If the leader asked Harry a question, mother prompted him in his reply. The leader suggested, "Here is a train, Harry. Would you like to play with it or would you like to play with this color cone or build with the blocks?" Mother replied, "Oh, let's look at the color cone, Harry. You want to see the color cone, don't you?" Immediately she led the child over to the low table where he could examine the color cone. Later as the leader went from group to group telling the story and showing the picture, she and two of the children stopped near Harry and his mother. "Sarah and Melvin would like to hear the story, Harry. Would you like

to hear it, too?" With this the leader pulled up a small chair and sat near Harry. Harry's mother answered for him, "It would be nice to hear the story. He just loves them."

The leader recognized that Harry's independence and his growth as an individual were completely impeded by the mother's presence. It would be necessary to find some way of getting the mother out of the group to save the situation for Harry.

The mother had taught in the adult department of the church school before Harry was born. She had not gone back to her class since then. The nursery class leader asked the general superintendent to find some work for this mother in the adult department. A class needed someone to guide adult discussion. The mother was urged to assume this leadership. The general superintendent worked with the nursery leader. Both of them assured Harry's mother that the child would be well cared for and quite happy in the nursery class. The mother went into the other department. Harry blossomed out into a normal three-year-old, well-adjusted little boy.

WHEN A TEMPER TANTRUM IS STAGED

Symptoms of a temper tantrum may be kicking, biting, screaming, regurgitation of food, beating the head on the floor or wall or any other evidence that the situation is too much for the child.

The nursery class leader will need to consider the cause of temper tantrums. If it is merely to secure his own way with the leader or with other children, one of several plans may be followed. The child may be left alone on one side of the room. An adult assistant will be near to watch him. Toys or a book may be placed near but no attention will be paid to the tantrum. The leader will need to remember that an angry child is a deaf child. Trying to talk to a child who has a temper tantrum avails little, for he cannot hear.

One nursery school authority has said, "The adult's best form of defense is to ignore the temper tantrum."

The child who is screaming and annoying other children in the group may need to be removed from the group. Of course, any physical interference with a child merely increases the

emotional state and intensifies the tantrum, but occasionally it is necessary to lift the child bodily and carry him out of the room. He should be taken where he will not annoy any other group. Frequently a rest room is available and the child may be carried into this room.

The leader may look out of the window. Possibly she will hum softly or sing one of the nursery songs in a low tone. If the child is overheated and she can do so, she may wash his face. Sometimes washing the face and hands, even holding the hands under cold water will help to calm the child, but usually the most successful method is to ignore the tantrum.

Generally the child will not repeat this behavior if it does not gain him his purpose. Occasionally there may be a child who will try to gain control of the situation through staging a temper tantrum as often as three or four consecutive Sundays. But with kind, sympathetic understanding and patient ignoring of his screams he learns that this form of behavior gains him nothing. He merely loses the opportunity to play with the toys and enjoy the company of other children. It does not pay and so he stops the temper tantrums.

Occasionally when the tantrum takes some other form than crying, the leader may say, "When you decide to play like the other children, you may come over and build with the blocks" (or substitute some other interest that appeals to that particular child).

Still a third plan that may be successful is to take the child out-of-doors on the steps. The fresh air, the familiar outdoors and having attention diverted in this way frequently proves sufficiently interesting so that the tantrum ends.

If the child holds his breath or bangs his head, many adults have feared that he might harm himself. Pediatricians assure us that no child has ever harmed himself through holding his breath and it is not likely that a child will hit his head hard enough really to hurt. He is merely trying to get attention or to gain his way.

However, the nursery class leader needs to be aware of the fact that sometimes adults create intolerable situations for little children. They are hurried beyond endurance. They may be with excitable adults who talk all the time, call to them across the room or clap their hands to attract attention. They are

nagged, annoyed, teased, until the only possible escape for the child is to rebel. Such rebellion may be expressed by temper tantrums. If this is the situation, the problem is with the adults, not the child. The child will need to have his confidence and security re-established. But there will be no cure for the outbursts until the adults recognize their own shortcomings and modify their intolerable demands or their lack of understanding of the healthful kind of environment for the young child.

THE CHILD WHO IS LONELY OR HOMESICK

If a child is frightened, or if he cries or screams because he is lonely or homesick, or if such behavior is the followup of illness, he should not be treated as a temper tantrum child, but should be given a sense of security. This may involve sending for the parent so that the child is assured that all is well.

Recently the pendulum has swung and the idea that young children must not be cuddled has changed. Psychologists and psychiatrists now tell us that there should be enough evidences of loving as exhibited through holding the child or giving him an occasional hug so that he will realize that he is loved and a deep security will be established. While this should not be overdone, there are times when a little child needs the feel of loving arms close to him.

PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

A child with a serious physical handicap should not attend a nursery class. But occasionally a slight handicap such as lameness may be evident. The leader will consider each one as an individual case. Such a child may need help to develop socially and emotionally, as well as physically. While he must be protected from overexertion, the handicap should interfere as little as possible with normal activities. Confidence in his own ability may need to be established.

It is likely that the other three-year-olds will accept the child in the same way that the leader accepts him. They may be encouraged to be considerate, but their consideration should not be detrimental to the child's best development. The handi-

cap should not be mentioned in the presence of any of the children.

LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES

The language of the three-year-old depends upon the grammatical forms and accents he hears about him. It is most important that good examples in voice, vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar be practiced by nursery class leaders.

The size of the vocabularies of the children vary greatly. Reba, an attractive curly-headed little sister of three older girls, had a vocabulary of only fifteen words when she entered nursery class. A careful physical examination by the doctor showed Reba to have excellent hearing. It developed that adoring sisters and parents had granted Reba's every wish before it was spoken. The nursery class teacher and the home co-operated fully in a new plan of action. Reba had to learn to talk, to secure what she wished. Within two months she was a regular chatter-box.

Inadequacies or inaccuracies are frequently evidenced in children's speech. Often this is because they hear words pronounced carelessly, or they may not have understood the word. Again, the family may have clung to "baby talk" with him.

Many nursery class children use incorrect pronunciation or lisping. Usually these difficulties disappear if the child hears only correct speech.

Stuttering is a more serious speech defect. There are various theories as to the cause. But usually the stutterer is nervous. Under emotional pressure the stuttering increases. Security, calm emotional life, freedom from nagging, teasing, fears or worries, will help greatly to overcome this defect.

The leader is aware of the fact that a child can understand a much greater number of words than those used in his speaking vocabulary. Conversation need not be limited to the speaking vocabulary of the children in the group.

THUMB-SUCKING, BITING, SCRATCHING, PINCHING, SPITTING, GRABBING, KICKING

Occasionally the nursery leader will find children who resort to any of the above mentioned forms of behavior. These may

be temporary and, if ignored, probably will drop out of the child's life. Some children need help to overcome them. Often a three-year-old has learned unsocial behavior from a slightly older child with whom he plays in the neighborhood.

David resorted to biting. He might bite a child's shoulder or finger. The leader took David by the hand, led him to the rest room and handed him a paper towel. She said, "You had better wash your mouth very carefully David. We must wash our mouths when we put things in that do not belong there. You had Mary's finger in your mouth. Of course, it hurt Mary. That is just too bad. Your mouth must be washed out." David was surprised. He took the paper towel, wet it and very carefully wiped off his tongue and lips. "Is it clean now?" he asked. "It looks clean," said the teacher, "I hope you keep it clean always and always."

The same type of discipline was used with Billy who suddenly developed a desire to spit. After he had washed his mouth carefully, he seemed to realize as did David that this type of behavior was not acceptable in the nursery class.

In order that the values of such teaching might carry over into the home, the nursery leader conferred with the parents and asked their co-operation. This was not done as a complaint. The parents were requested not to refer to the incident at home unless the child repeated the same act there. In that case the parents were requested to use the same form of discipline, that is, have the child wash out his own mouth with the explanation that only a few things go into the mouth. Food, water and milk are put into the mouth. A toothbrush is put in the mouth when teeth are brushed. No further attention was paid to the biting and spitting. It was not pointed out as "naughty," for this would add emphasis to the act. But it was not expected that the children would repeat it—and they did not.

Thumb-sucking or putting toys in the mouth should be treated in much the same way. The explanation will be given that food, milk, water and toothbrushes go into mouths. At the same time the toys that have been put in the mouth should be washed by the child, but this should not be made such an attractive activity that he will put the toy in his mouth again.

so that he may have the leader's company while he washes the toys.

Scratching, grabbing toys and kicking other children come under these behavior difficulties that may be expected occasionally but should not cause undue excitement on the part of the leader. The children should be shown a better way to get toys. "We ask Bobby to please give us the truck" or we say "Have you finished with the truck, Bobby?"

Sometimes the children feel that the word "please" should have a magical result and give them anything they desire. It is a surprise to them when another child refuses the request. When the magical formula "please give it to me" fails, the leader needs to explain that if Bobby has finished with the toy he will be glad to hand it over, but otherwise he will continue using it until he is through.

Scratching, pinching, and kicking need to be watched carefully because of the danger to the child who is so treated. If there is any skin abrasion, the leader should be careful to cleanse it with 70 per cent alcohol. However, it is to be hoped that such misbehavior will not be serious. The young child who is not accustomed to playing with other children his age but does romp with his parents, sometimes finds that doing certain things to them brings desired results. He has discovered that scratching or pinching the adults with whom he is playing gains him a lot of attention even though that attention may take the form of punishment. It is likely that he does not realize how much a scratch or a pinch or a kick may hurt, but he does know that there is a definite reaction to this form of behavior.

Since most of these unsocial types of behavior are used for the express purpose of attaining some desire of the child, the less excitement he causes by the behavior the less likely he is to repeat it. Sometimes he may need to be isolated from the group, perhaps over on one side of the room where he will be given one or two books or a few toys and told that he may play by himself for a while until he shows he can play as he should with other children. The right form of behavior should be pointed out to him. After a few minutes he may be invited to come join the rest of the children. Perhaps, the invitation may be extended in some such form as "Bobby, I think you

are big enough now to know how to play nicely with the rest of the children. We are building a tower over here and would like to have you come help us."

Being "big enough" is one of the greatest incentives to a three-year-old child. A smile or an occasional pat of approval from the leader helps the child to feel that he is reinstated. He belongs to this group and desires to continue as a happy member of it. Often misbehavior is the appeal of a child for the attention of the leader. All too frequently the child who co-operates and plays happily receives far too little attention from the leader who is busy watching and talking with the children who cause disturbances of one kind or another.

CROSS, EASILY IRRITATED CHILDREN

Many troubles with younger children can be avoided if the child is kept in good physical condition. Behavior problems of young children are closely allied with physical disturbances. Often the cross, nervous, irritable child may be suffering from constipation, malnutrition or physical exhaustion. These may be symptoms of some childhood illness, or the child may not have fully recovered from an illness. It may be necessary to isolate such a child from the group until he is ready to make his usual happy adjustment. The leader will recognize that such children are ill and will not expect from them the same reaction that could be expected from the child who is physically fit.

WE LOOK AT THE NURSERY CLASS LEADERSHIP

THE LEADERSHIP of the nursery class determines the value of this department of the church school, to each child and to the church. The leadership in different churches varies as to preparation for this responsibility. Many churches have volunteer leadership throughout the church school. In some of these churches, there are excellent nursery classes. Unfortunately there are many other churches in which the nursery class exists in name only.

Any church in which there are three-year-old children and alert, Christian adults who love little children and who are willing to continue to learn, may have a fine nursery class. This department of the church school is still in the experimental stage. Nursery class leaders are seeking better ways to help parents to nurture little children religiously. They seek ways to supplement the work of the home, when the child reaches the place in his own development when he is ready to enter the nursery class group.

Superintendent of the Nursery Department

The superintendent of the nursery department may be and usually is one of the leaders in the nursery class. But the nursery department includes both the nursery class in the church school and the home roll. The babies in all of the church homes, and in unchurched homes, where the parents evidence any interest, should be enrolled on the home roll.

The superintendent of the nursery department is responsible for visiting these homes. She may have assistant visitors to help her.

Letters, parents' magazines, books of special interest to parents, may be provided for the parents of young children. The minister should be advised as to the interest of parents in having

their babies baptized. The nursery class superintendent and the pastor need to co-operate fully.

The superintendent is also responsible for the nursery department workers' conferences. These conferences may be planned for definite times or there may be just four regular meetings a year and occasional meetings when the superintendent and other leaders feel the need for talking over their plans.

There should be regular conferences at least two weeks before the beginning of a quarter, that is, the third week in September, December, March, and June. At these regular workers' conferences, the superintendent and other leaders will talk over their possible procedure for the quarter. It is quite likely that they will wish also to mend and clean the books of the nursery class, to make new blankets or doll clothes, possibly to wash and iron the dresses and doll bedding or to scrub the other toys.

These "housekeeping activities" may form part of the social hour of the conference, or it may be that this necessary preparation for the work of the department will be done at some other time each quarter and the workers' conference will be given entirely to study and discussion.

The superintendent of the department is responsible for helping the leaders in the department to grow. Perhaps this growth will be through pointing out certain helpful articles in current magazines. These articles may be presented and discussed at the workers' conference. Perhaps the leaders will decide to plan a study series based on some of the books listed in the bibliography (see page 234). In this case the leader will be responsible for securing the books and also for guiding the discussion, or she may make definite assignments so that the other leaders will be prepared.

When new leaders are needed in the department, the superintendent will make the final decision in conference with the general superintendent and pastor. It may be that the person who is invited to come to the group will be asked to help for just a few weeks. If this time is definitely stated, both the person to whom the invitation has been extended and the superintendent of the nursery department will be better able to decide whether the choice is a wise one. It is difficult to secure adequate nursery class leadership, but the superintendent should

always remember that it is easier to find a new leader than to get rid of a poor one.

Other Leaders, Including Secretary and Pianist

It is difficult to say how many nursery class leaders are needed. But there should be at least two leaders, even when the enrollment is very small. There will be times when one teacher must devote her time and attention exclusively to one child. At such times she cannot be responsible for the group. Probably four teachers will be needed when the enrollment is nineteen or twenty and attendance about fifteen.

One of these leaders may serve as pianist. One will be the secretary, responsible for the nursery class records (see page 183).

The pianist should be a skilled musician who is sympathetic and keenly aware of the musical needs and interests of little children. She must know when not to play as well as when and what to play for them. It is necessary that she improvise at times. She will realize the need for simplicity in music for little children and will seek for rhythmic excerpts from longer compositions.

The secretary of the nursery class will have charge of supplies for the group. She will know the number of copies of *My Book* necessary to supply one to every child in the group and to have at least two for clipping purposes and one each for the leaders in the nursery class.

It will also be the responsibility of the secretary to secure and to file the records of each child and to keep these up to date. She will attend to filing duplicate cards with the general superintendent or the person responsible for the records for the entire school and also with the pastor. There will be no weekly record for each individual child but the secretary probably will be responsible for checking on absentees in order that the leaders in the department may know of any children in the group who are ill or of homes in which there is any reason for the leaders or the pastor to extend any special friendly interest.

Whenever possible all leaders in the nursery class, including the department superintendent, are urged to take training courses that will help them to become more skillful in guiding religious nurture of little children. This special training may

be through leadership training classes, summer conferences or as correspondence courses.

All leaders in the nursery class are persons holding important and responsible positions in the church. The little children with whom these leaders are associated may learn to like or dislike the church, and to establish their standards of right and wrong behavior toward other children at church as these standards are interpreted by the nursery class leaders.

There is complete accord and co-operative planning by these leaders. The pianist needs only a nod or a glance from the leader to know music is needed. A glance between two leaders should be sufficient for the one to understand the desirable procedure with a child. These "glances" are not open winks, or raised eyebrows. Children quickly notice and may resent this means of communication between adults. It is rather an example of harmonious co-operation between adults who work together for the sake of little children.

Qualifications for Nursery Class Leadership

Nursery class teachers must be in good physical condition. They should be mentally alert, and should continue to study, and to learn more about ways to meet their responsibilities and more about the three-year-old child. They must know little children, their physical, mental and religious needs. In addition, nursery class leaders must know the special interests and abilities and the limitations of three-year-olds.

It is presupposed that the nursery class leaders are Christian persons, for Christianity is *caught* by these younger children; it is not *taught* them verbally.

Nursery class leaders must be able to greet parents with ease. This involves establishment of confidence, so that the parents feel free to consult the leaders at any time. The nursery class leaders, as they visit in the home or meet the parents at the church, may help most if they are recognized as sympathetic, interested persons, who through study and experience are prepared for the leadership of this youngest group in the church school.

The leaders should be young in spirit, able to play with children and to enter into their interests and activities. But there

should be sufficient maturity to inspire confidence in the parents. Each nursery class leader is a "mother person" to the children. Usually a nursery class leader should be at least twenty-one years of age before she assumes this leadership. She must keep an open mind, and be ready to accept suggestions and new ideas. She should become more skillful in her work with little children and their parents as her experience in this work increases. Thus, she must be a *growing* person.

The following list of suggestions is given in a concise form for easy reference. The nursery class leader will do well to read these suggestions frequently and to check any that she feels that she needs to watch especially.

Have a calm, unhurried procedure.

Remember that pleasure is an essential to learning. Make the nursery class experience a pleasurable one.

Encourage friendly play and individual choice.

Encourage the older children to join in group play.

Give necessary individual attention to younger children and new members.

Make frequent mention of names of leaders and of the children.

Avoid hovering over children or interfering with them, especially when what they are doing is not harmful to others or to themselves.

Stoop to the level of the child occasionally when speaking to him.

Minimize bumps and falls. Sympathize but avoid "babying."

Make frequent use of the terms "our church," "our nursery class," "our minister."

Show acceptable types of behavior and how to use toys and books.

When questions are answered or an explanation is given, make it simple. Avoid confusion of ideas. Make statements brief and use words within the understanding of the child.

Always repeat directions in the same way.

Only one person at a time should give directions.

Expect desired conduct.

Watch tone of voice. Keep it pleasantly modulated. Enunciate clearly.

Smile frequently.

Avoid talking too much. Listen and learn from the child.

Develop love for all children without sentimentality.

Cultivate a calm, pleasant emotional attitude.

Avoid needless pushing and touching of the children to hurry them along.

Be consistent at all times.

So far as possible delete the words "hurry" and "don't" from the vocabulary used with three-year-olds.

Learn to laugh *at* herself and *with* the children.

Study to be a growing person.

BE PATIENT!

WE LOOK AT SPECIAL TEACHING PROBLEMS

WHAT are some of the special teaching problems that the nursery class leader must meet in her preparation? Frequently such questions as the following are asked the nursery leader: When do you worship? What do you teach? How much Bible do you "teach" three-year-old children? How do you explain the offering? What prayer opportunities are there for nursery children? In addition to these questions, special consideration must be given to safeguarding the children physically, to promotion from nursery class to kindergarten, and to the keeping of records.

Worship and Teaching

All living and playing together in the nursery class is teaching. The nursery leader cannot wait until she is ready to say or do certain things. She must be alert at all times. She will follow the lead of the children. She may have a tentative plan when she enters the nursery class room. Occasionally by the end of the session she will have used the plan or some part of it. More often she will have followed the lead of the first child to enter the room. This is not haphazard procedure. It requires much and continuous preparation on the part of the leaders. It means a clear understanding of objectives in religious education for the three-year-old, and it involves a growing ability to sense a pressing need and to meet it.

There is no place for any formal plan that must be rigidly followed in the nursery class. The chairs are not arranged in a circle nor in rows. They are scattered, two or three in a group in one place, a single chair with a book beside it in another place, perhaps, three or four chairs near the small toys. No child is told to "sit down and listen." If a child prefers to sit on a rug, the leader will find a few minutes when she may sit there with him. They will talk together, but the nursery leader needs to listen much. She must learn to give the child

an opportunity to talk and to ask questions or carry on a conversation. A large part of the teaching must be with the individual child or with two or three children, *never* with a large group. There is the danger of overstimulation when an attempt is made to do group work with little children.

It often happens that the same procedure will be repeated for several children as individuals or for two or three children who are playing together.

Actual sharing in living together is a lesson. Telling a story *about* this desirable behavior is not a lesson. The children learn that they must have respect for the rights of others, that they must treat persons and things differently. Through the practice of these fundamental Christian points of view they learn that there are certain definite rules which they must remember in the use of toys, such as, each child may take a turn.

Through these nursery class experiences the leaders seek to give background on which the little child may build as they help him to interpret Christian living and playing together. Shirley discovers that hitting another person or pulling his hair or giving him a pinch may attract attention but it is not a gesture of friendliness that is approved either by the person so approached or by the leader. The leader may calmly take Shirley's hand and lead her away from the group. She will explain, "We do kind things with our hands. We give persons toys with our hands. We smooth Bob's hair or pat his arm like this." But this "lesson" is given to Shirley alone. It is spoken in a low tone. Probably the leader stoops to the level of the child before she speaks. She does not rebuke or correct in harsh or loud tones.

A nursery leader never raises her voice to call across the room to a child. She does not clap her hands to attract attention. She goes over to the individual child. Loud, harsh tones excite, overstimulate and cause emotional upsets. There are many, many "lessons" during the nursery class session.

"But" asks the visitor, "how can these children learn Bible stories and get religious teaching in this way? They just play in nursery class. They may as well stay at home and play!"

The leaders and children do play together. Religious teaching when given a conventional adult interpretation is not done,

but the nursery leaders try in all that they do through conversation, through play, through joyous living together, to apply Christian teaching. They have a fair, sympathetic, understanding attitude. This they believe is religious teaching for young children and that the more conventional form is not suitable or helpful to young children. The procedure is informal. No part of the session can be set aside as a "worship service" or a "teaching period" where specifically religious topics are introduced. This does not mean that the leaders do not try to lead the nursery children into worship experiences, but it does mean that they do not plan *formal worship services*. The children play together, take turns, sing, talk and the leaders guide. In the same way, when seconds of worship opportunities come, the leaders use them.

How may blocks provide religious experience? In what way could doll play be interpreted religiously?

As the three-year-old plays with the blocks, he experiences the joy of manipulative play. He builds a sense of security. He begins to feel happy here in the church, this part of the church that is his own nursery class room. This feeling of at-homeness, of belonging, is the foundation of his entire church life. If the first steps in building of this security are taken this year in the nursery class, the teacher has been highly successful. The church is the first step out of the home for most children. Their attitude to people outside the family, to group life, may be set by their church life. This is a tremendous responsibility for the church.

In the church he sees other three-year-old children. He plays in the midst of other children but he may follow his own interests. Later when confidence is established, the child begins to accept gestures of friendliness from others and to extend such gestures just as he might do at home. The leader might help at this point, "We have such happy times playing here in our nursery class" or "We have such happy times playing together at our church. Thank you, God, for fun." Perhaps she will sing the words of "When I'm Very Happy" or will sing "Snow" with the substitution of the word "fun." This may be done with the individual or with small groups of two or three children. Thus a sense of joy is built at being in the church, and the child begins to learn to love his neighbor.

In doll play the child usually relives home experiences. He cares for the doll in the way that mother cares for him or for a younger brother or sister in the home. From this he may be led to feel and later to express, "Thank you, God, for my mother." In addition to this, play usually leads to a sharing of dolls and blankets and doll beds and other housekeeping toys. So a regard for the rights of others is fostered. This is fundamental in the development of a Christian regard for personality.

Use of the Bible in the Nursery Class

The Bible is an adult book written for adults. There are only a few incidents that are suggested for use with nursery children in this year's work. Little children lack the necessary background experiences for interpretation of most of the Bible stories. They cannot understand anything in which they have no experience.

There are only a few Bible stories that may be used with nursery class children. These are all from the New Testament. It is much better to repeat them frequently than to tell new stories that can have no meaning for the children.

The stories "Marni Gets Dressed in the Morning," (Mitchell, *Here and Now Story Book*), "The Three Little Kittens," "Mother Goose Rhymes," or other childhood favorites are repeated over and over again as many times a day as parents have the patience to tell them. So the few Bible stories that may be within the experience of the three-year-olds may be told and retold. A Bible story picture-scrapbook may be made of one or two carefully selected pictures of the Madonna and Child. They should be free of details of shepherds, Magi, angels, halo, saints and other elements. The pictures and accompanying stories of "The Little Baby," "Caring for the Baby Jesus," "Jesus and the Children," "Jesus and the Birds," and "Jesus and the Flowers" (see *My Book*, Parts I, II, III, IV), may be included also.

The nursery leader does not "teach Bible verses" but she seeks to live them with the children. She seeks also to help the children to build a victorious, vital and Christian faith, a security and confidence in these friends whom he meets at the church.

The few carefully selected Bible stories are chosen with the thought that these may form the basic ideals for Christian living as opportunities are provided for the practice of this living.

The Offering

Money has no value to the little child. He may call all coins pennies or nickels. He may differentiate between coins or he may use the term money to describe all coins, but generations of parents have handed their children "the collection" when they started to church school. It is to be hoped that the children do not hear the offering referred to always as *pennies*.

In later years the offering will be a part of the worship of the department. In the nursery class it receives no special attention and very little mention. Since most of the children bring an offering, a plate or basket or dish should be available for it. This receptacle should be near the door or close to where the wraps are removed. The children will be encouraged to place their money in it at once. Then they are free to play as they wish without clutching a purse or an offering. If placed in the basket at once, it will not be lost or swallowed.

The basket should be available to the children but as soon as all have placed their money in it, it may be taken away. Sometimes the pleasure of handling the coins, the delightful sound as they are dropped makes them desirable as play toys. This should be avoided. If the child desires to put a handful in his pocket or purse, parents may be embarrassed or amused or horrified. Whatever the parents' reaction, it is not likely to be a healthful experience for the child.

Occasionally the explanation may be given to any children who are interested that the money helps to buy coal and pay for the lights and to buy their toys. Even little children have heard father or mother speak of coal or electric bills.

No reference should be made to missionary purposes. These are far beyond the understanding and experience of little children. The receptacle should be called by its name, the offering basket or plate. No symbolic term such as "love box" should be used with these young children.

Prayer in Nursery Class

The nursery class leader wishes to help children to have a first sense of the reality of God, and she will be constantly alert for prayer opportunities. Some Sundays there may be two or three prayer opportunities during the session. Again there may be no time when prayer can be used. No leader will force the use of prayer, yet it is here in the nursery class that the child is given a pattern of group prayer for the years ahead. How may a little child be led into fellowship with God through prayer?

Nursery class leaders realize that it is impossible to have a set, formal program and hope to teach three-year-old children. But the nursery leader also realizes that she must be well prepared for each session. For every session she will hope and plan that there may be prayer opportunities with her group.

Spontaneous prayers help the three-year-old to begin to sense a fellowship with God and with other friendly persons in the group. The child is not sufficiently articulate to express this sense of fellowship. It may be several years before he will know why something within him reaches out to commune with the Heavenly Father when he feels joyous or when he has a sense of gratitude or has completed some bit of work or play satisfactorily.

There are high peaks of experience such as those which come to children when they see the blossoming tulips or jonquils grown from bulbs they planted in the fall. They could not make the bulb grow. They could help God by putting it in the ground and covering it with earth. In the fall when the leaves flutter down, red, yellow, brown, there is the joy of walking through the rustling leaves and tossing them about in play. There may be the experience of admiring an especially beautiful leaf and the brief prayer, "We are so glad for the leaves, red and yellow and brown."

Another peak in experience may come when a child tells of a new brother or sister in the home. Quite naturally a prayer may follow, "Thank you, God, for Jeanne's new baby brother. Thank you for mothers who care for little babies."

But the nursery leader cannot expect unusual experiences to happen often within a year. How then shall she guide the prayer life of the children? Sometimes the guidance will mean

that the leader lifts into prominence certain activities of the children. "Thank you, God, for friends at church" or "Thank you for our minister who comes in to play with us." Occasionally a song may be used as a prayer such as "Friends at Church," "When I'm Very Happy," "Snow."

The little child has probably accepted God just as he has accepted mother and father and other persons in his daily life. He does not know to whom we pray when we talk to God. Nursery leaders need to guard carefully their use of the term Heavenly Father lest the child thinks the prayer is addressed to his own daddy. If the leader is careful always to address the prayer to God and to keep the phraseology within the understanding of little children, she may help them to an experience that may grow into worship and a fellowship with God.

Rote or verse prayers serve the purpose of providing patterns for use with the children, but spontaneous prayer that is an outgrowth of the day's experience may provide a real reaching out toward God. The Lord's Prayer should never be taught to three-year-old children. Studies have proven that this prayer becomes a mere jumble of words to little children. There is serious danger of actually teaching irreverence or of encouraging the child to repeat words and phrases that he does not understand. Leaders do not wish children to think that the repetition of meaningless words can be substituted for real communion with God.

When the occasional lunch is served in the nursery class, there is an opportunity for the brief prayer that expresses gratitude. This prayer, as all other prayers, should be worded so that no idea or concept of God will need to be "unlearned" later in life.

Occasionally the nursery leader may wish to send home suggested prayers for use with the children. She may include suggestions for the possible prayers that she plans to use so that the parents will understand the emphasis in the nursery class, and the home and church school will work together toward this emphasis. The leader of nursery children faces the responsibility of introducing the fellowship of prayer to small groups of two or three children in her larger group of three-year-olds in the nursery class.

A New Child in the Group

Stepping out of the home into a strange situation, a strange room, with adults whom one has not known before, and children whom one has never seen, these experiences may be terrifying to a little child unless he is adequately prepared.

Jerry had been accustomed to having father or mother leave home every Sunday morning. Jerry knew that it was Sunday morning because it was the day on which he heard church bells ringing. He had always been given the explanation, "Mother or daddy (the mother and father alternated) has gone to church. Some day when you are big enough you will go to church, too." Frequently when they were out for a ride they drove past the church and showed Jerry "our church." Occasionally he was taken into the empty building and shown the nursery class room. When the Sunday came that mother and father considered him old enough, Jerry was thrilled at the prospect of going to church with mother and daddy.

Through frequent conversations about the church, the explanation had been given. There would be many other boys and girls in the nursery class room. Miss Lowe and Miss Tilles would be there to play with the children. Jerry went into the room with mother. Miss Lowe approached him slowly, stooped to his level and greeted him. "We are so glad that you are big enough to come to nursery class, Jerry. My name is Miss Lowe. Will you come over with me to hang up your coat and hat?" Jerry went over there and with a little help placed his wraps. Then he was offered the choice of playing with the ball or looking at the books or walking around the room with Miss Tilles to see where all the toys were kept and to decide which toys he would like to use.

Mother had been greeted and was invited to stay with the group for this first Sunday if she cared to do so. She decided she would wait for a little while and then would tell Jerry that she was leaving but would be back for him before it was time to go home. This provided a sense of security. Jerry was not in a totally strange situation, for he had gradually become acquainted with the church and with the room that was his especial place in the church. True, he was meeting strange

persons, but mother was there and when she felt she had promised to come back soon. It was only a few Sundays before Jerry felt quite at home in this new situation although he was a very shy child.

Another Sunday the door opened, Elizabeth came in accompanied by father, mother, older sister and grandmother. Again, Miss Lowe approached the child slowly and stooped to her level and explained, "I am Miss Lowe. Will you tell me your name?" Elizabeth was excited and on tiptoe with anticipation. The mother and father and grandmother all began to explain that they had just moved to the community the past week and Elizabeth did not know a child and they had talked all week about coming to the church on Sunday. They were sure she would be all right but maybe they had better stay down in the nursery class with her.

Miss Lowe realized that Elizabeth would not be likely to make a very happy adjustment if the whole family stayed with her. As tactfully as possible she suggested that father and grandmother and sister go to classes suited to their interests. The mother might remain with Elizabeth. Elizabeth had been brought into a strange situation in a strange new community. This made her adjustment difficult, especially since she had been overstimulated by the whole family bringing her into the nursery class room, and the excited family conversation in anticipation of the event.

The intensity of the feeling of loss and insecurity suffered by a little child in a totally strange situation may never be fully realized by some adults. The child should be prepared for the experience. The nursery leader should greet the child happily on his own level but not in a condescending way. The child should be helped to feel that here is a new but an understanding friend. The adjustment to the new situation will be made more easily under such circumstances. This means not only an understanding leader but complete co-operation between leaders and the home.

The child should not feel that he is being shown off or made the center of great attention. Neither should he be startled by an overwhelming effusion on the part of the strange adult. He should be greeted cordially but quietly. The mother may be invited to stay for the first session if she cares to do so or if

the child seems timid or afraid. Otherwise she will be directed to the class she wishes to attend, but she should be assured that so long as everything goes as it should she will not be called. If the child seems unhappy or gives evidence of fear arising from the new situation, the mother will be called at once.

Sarah attached herself to one leader in the group. She would play contentedly for a few minutes and then she would go to the leader, slip her hand into the leader's and say, "My mother *will* come for me," and the leader would smile and give her hand a little squeeze, "Sarah, your mother *will* come for you." Usually the leader suggested another choice of activity for Sarah. This continued for several weeks until a feeling of security had been built.

Virginia had a difficult time feeling secure in nursery class. Her father who brought her reported that she looked forward to nursery class with greatest anticipation, but a few minutes after he left her each Sunday Virginia would cry. The leader tried to assure her. She even took her to see the room in which her father sat, but this did not suffice. She wanted to be happy. She tried to play but she was acutely homesick after a few minutes in the group.

One Sunday the leader suggested that daddy leave his hat on the rack beside Virginia's. The father was most co-operative. He agreed to the suggestion. That Sunday when Virginia missed daddy she was led to the rack where she could look at his hat. Daddy would not go without his hat. Neither would he go without Virginia. She could play because she knew that daddy was not far away and would soon come back.

Occasionally a new child will stage a temper tantrum. Usually this is a method to attract attention or to secure his own way. Sometimes it may be the result of fear. The leader will study the cause carefully. If there is fear, she will seek to help build up confidence. If it is merely to attract attention, then the less attention that is paid the better. Often the parent wishes to stay with the child for the first few Sundays. This is usually a good plan until the child feels at home and acquainted, but the parent should never stay beyond this time. Nothing interferes so greatly with the nursery class work and the good that may be accomplished for the child. Even the parent who thinks that the child is paying no attention to his

presence usually hampers the child's development. Sometimes it is necessary to insist firmly but courteously that the child be left alone.

Some parents do not realize the purpose of the nursery class nor the very real danger of bringing a baby into a group. Such parents may ask that a toddler be cared for. The leader of the group should explain just what experience the nursery class seeks to provide for little children. It seems best not to state any specific age for entrance into the group. Many schools set as standards for entrance the firm muscular control of the child so that he is steady on his feet as he plays around the room and the establishment of toilet habits. Usually this physical development comes at about the same time that the child shows an emotional and social development that would make it possible for him to take his place in a group. These developments may not usually be expected under two-and-a-half years of age. The child's physical fitness and nervous stability must be considered also. Younger children are especially susceptible to throat infections and colds. If the child is easily excited and appears to be emotionally overstimulated when in a group and especially if he is susceptible to colds, he should be protected from all group contacts and should *not* be taken into the nursery class. For this reason it seems wise to plan for the child's entrance when he is about three years of age.

Some children may have attained sufficient emotional stability to warrant their entrance into a group by the time they are two years of age, but this is too young for most children to make a happy adjustment. The greater number will not be emotionally ready until three or three-and-a-half years of age. Still others who are more tense or who react in a manner that denotes nerve strain may not be ready for group participation until they are of kindergarten age.

Some Physical Safeguards in the Nursery Class

Not only emotional age but physical resistance of each child should be considered. Little children are not all equally endowed physically. Some are apparently immune to the so-called "children's diseases" while others are acutely susceptible to them.

All religious leaders of any age group realize that there is a definite relation between physical wellbeing and Christian living. Jesus taught this centuries ago. If this is true for the mature adult whose experience supposedly has fitted him for meeting the stress and strain of life, it is even more true for the little child who lacks the experience and ability to understand why he feels and acts as he does.

Formerly many parents were of the opinion that a child might just as well be exposed to the children's diseases while very young. Then, if he developed the disease, he might be immune to it after he had started to school. Study and research by pediatricians have changed this opinion. Now we are informed authoritatively that the younger the child the more serious the disease. The little child must build up a certain reserve or resistance so that he will be better able to combat poisons and avoid the complications that frequently follow an illness.

Epidemics may be started in a community when all precautions have been taken, but all too frequently epidemics are due to the lack of knowledge of the seriousness of the situation or are the result of individual carelessness. For example, a child exposed to measles may show no symptoms of the disease. He may attend a children's party. A few days later the rash develops. He may have been the cause of every child in that group suffering from measles. For this reason, children who are exposed should be kept from the group until all danger of development of the disease has passed.

Nursery children should be taught to keep all objects and toys out of their mouths. It is important also that they be taught the use of their own handkerchiefs and the need to turn their heads away from others when they cough or sneeze.

The chart on page 177 does not attempt to treat children's diseases in detail. It purposed to acquaint nursery class leaders with the age of greatest susceptibility, the manner of transmission, and quarantine precautions.

Not all doctors agree as to the period that may elapse between exposure to a disease and its development. Local and state laws vary as to the length of time for the necessary quarantine. The nursery leader should acquaint herself with the local or state quarantine laws. Under each of the diseases

mentioned on page 177 there is a space provided where the leader may write in the quarantine regulations of her local community or state. She may secure pamphlet material from the state board of health and government bulletins from the Children's Bureau, Department of Labor, Washington, D. C. Usually single copies are available free of charge.

Parents are co-operative when they realize the quarantine is to safeguard their child as well as the other children in the group. No child should ever be permitted in a group when he shows evidences of a cold. The common cold is frequently the first stage of measles, whooping cough, or some other definite infection. The child who has the cold may transmit it to some other child. Furthermore, any person with a cold has lowered resistance and is more likely to prove susceptible to any other contagious disease with which he comes in contact. Nursery class leaders are not exempt and should quarantine themselves from the group when they suffer from a "common cold."

When in doubt as to how long the child should be kept from the group after an illness, it may be well to offer the general rule that all children be kept away from other children for two weeks after symptoms of the disease have disappeared. This may seem rather strict to some persons, but if such a rule could be enforced, there would be little danger of epidemics and parents would have less cause for fear of the child suffering from a series of diseases one after another.

All parents and teachers are sufficiently informed and dread diphtheria, scarlet fever, and smallpox so that there is no likelihood of a child who has suffered from any one of these diseases coming back to the group until all danger has passed. The four more common children's diseases are listed in the chart in their order of seriousness in this age group. Two recognized specialists of children's diseases made the following reports:

"Measles is the most contagious of the infectious diseases except smallpox. . . . The younger the child, the greater the danger (of complications, such as broncho-pneumonia). It occurs chiefly in children under three years. . . . Measles is the most dreaded of all epidemic diseases in infant hospitals, diphtheria being no exception to the rule."¹

¹ "Measles," by Le Boutillier and Hemplemen, *Cyclopedia of Medicine*, F. A. Davis, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Used by permission.

<i>Most Susceptible Age</i>	<i>How Transmitted</i>	<i>Period Between Exposure and Development</i>	<i>Length of Quarantine</i>
1-10	By direct contact—not carried by third person.	MEASLES Usually 8-14 days, but <i>may</i> run 28 days. Most contagious during early stages of disease before appearance of rash.	Child having disease should be isolated at least 7 days or as long as any purulent discharge continues after disappearance of rash. Exposed children should be kept from others not less than 20 days following exposure. Our local quarantine laws are:
6 mos. to 7 years (70%) of cases are children under 4 years.	By direct contact and possibly by the third person.	WHOOPING COUGH 5 days to 18 days, average 10 days. Highly contagious.	Duration of disease 8 to 10 weeks. Child should be isolated until paroxysms—or whooping—have entirely disappeared. Our local quarantine laws are:
1-10 years.	By direct contact or possibly by third person.	CHICKENPOX 14-21 days—usually 12 to 18 days. Highly contagious, probably through respiratory tract.	Isolate child until eruption crusts have fallen away. Exposed children should be kept from others at least 3 weeks. Our local quarantine laws are:
5-15 years. No age immune. Uncommon under 2 years.	By direct contact and occasionally by third person if infective material is on hands, etc.	MUMPS 6-30 days—usually about 18-21 days. Highly contagious, from several days before swelling shows, until symptoms have disappeared.	Isolate child for 4 weeks from beginning of infection or until all swelling has disappeared. Exposed children should be isolated at least 3 weeks. Our local quarantine laws are:

Relationship of Pastor to Nursery Class

The minister of the church who visits the nursery class of the church avails himself of a very real opportunity. The nursery class superintendent should explain to the minister how helpful it is to the group when he stops in every Sunday even though his visit must be very brief. If the minister teaches an adult class, he may be able to slip away during the singing of the hymn and visit the nursery class just long enough for the children to see him and for him to see and feel acquainted with them. Although he may have to stagger such visits and share his time between the nursery class and the group of kindergarten children on one Sunday and older groups of children on the next Sunday, at least if he visits regularly the children will see and recognize him as their minister—their friend. When the nursery class leader invites the pastor to visit, the invitation should include a brief conference. At this time she will explain the purpose of the nursery class. She will point out the fact that the nursery class is the child's first introduction to the church, that here they plan for happy opportunities for the children to live and play together. She will explain that the children learn to share and take turns, that occasionally they sing together and sometimes have a brief story. Whenever the opportunity is afforded, there is a short prayer addressed to God. Through such happy experiences in their introduction to the church, a feeling of security is built up.

The pastor should understand that he is invited to come in to see the children and to let them see him, but that no "speech" is expected. He may stop to inquire about a doll family. He may look at pictures with a small group. He may even stoop to the level of a little child and ask about the block building. He may listen while a small group sings a favorite song. Some ministers who have had such happy associations with little children, the youngest members of their church family, feel that these experiences make them better able to minister to the needs of the entire church group.

A happy, friendly relationship between the pastor and these potential church members establishes something of security and satisfaction which the young child cannot explain but which adds greatly to his sense of belonging.

Such ministry to three-year-olds may mean a friendly keeping quiet, not annoying the children with questions, or it may mean conversations when the minister learns from a little child.

When the Child Is Promoted to Kindergarten

Each nursery class leader will need to decide the best procedure for promotion for her nursery children to the kindergarten. She will seek to prepare the four-year-old children so that they may enter happily into the kindergarten group. She will decide when to promote a child.

In some groups each child is promoted individually as he reaches his fourth birthday. Promotion then becomes part of the birthday celebration. Where there is an informal kindergarten or where the nursery class room is small and the space is limited, it is quite possible that the four-year-old can make a happier, more adequate social adjustment by thus being absorbed into the kindergarten group.

The leader will take into account the school laws regarding entrance of children into the public schools. It is not to be expected that the child should spend more than two years in the kindergarten. If his birthday comes at the time of year so that he will be barred from public school and the primary department superintendent insists that the child should be in first grade before he enters the primary department, the nursery class leader may consider it wise to let the child continue for a short time longer in the nursery class. Perhaps in this case there will be about three promotions during the year, possibly in March, June, and September. This provides for promotion after irregular attendance of winter, before summer vacations and at regular promotion day in the church school.

In other schools there may be just the one promotion a year, usually in the early fall. Whatever the plan, the leader will seek to provide as natural, normal and unexcitable a plan as possible. She will avoid all exploitation of the children. There will be no "promotion exercises" in which the nursery children appear with older groups or before the school assembly.

There may be a problem of parents and other adults who "enjoy seeing the little children" at the general promotion exercises. The leader will guard against antagonizing the

adults but she will explain to them why she is seeking to guard against the exploitation, overexcitement and overstimulation of little children. She will point out the advantages of having promotion a happy occasion for them rather than one of fear and dread because they find themselves in an unknown and unusual situation. Generally the adults are willing to forego their own entertainment for the good of the children when they understand the reasons.

Frequently a leader is faced with the responsibility of deciding whether a child should be promoted to the kindergarten or kept in the nursery class even when he has reached his fourth birthday. All such cases will need to be decided upon their individual merits. Joyce had a very limited vocabulary. Although she enjoyed watching every activity of the nursery class, her social development was somewhat slower than the other children in the group. The leader conferred with the parents, asked them to think it over at home before they made their decision. She pointed out that Joyce was mentally alert, her language development had improved greatly since she had been in nursery class, but socially she was dependent upon others. If she could remain in the nursery class for a few months longer with special help, there was a possibility that she might develop more rapidly than she would as the youngest child in the older kindergarten group.

The parents were most co-operative. They were quite willing that Joyce should remain in the nursery class for a little while longer. The three months that Joyce remained in the nursery class she grew by leaps and bounds in her social adjustments. She became a leader of other children. She was considerate of younger children. She suggested and led activities with the older group of children who were slightly younger than she. When she entered the kindergarten, her leadership in this group continued and she made a happy normal adjustment. Her parents felt that the three months additional experience in the nursery group was largely accountable for her very happy adjustment a year later in the public school kindergarten. Frequently individual attention that is given in a way that will not make the child self-conscious will work wonders in helping to overcome what might later become personality difficulty.

Illness or overcrowding at home, natural shyness or position

in the family (the youngest of several children or the youngest of two with great difference in the ages) may be the cause of a child not being socially adjusted so that his chronological and social ages agree. On the other hand, a child may be socially developed so that adjustment could be made with an older group two or three months before the fourth birthday. The leader should always be careful to make it clear to the parents that it is not because of the child's mental inability but rather because she seeks the happiest possible social development for the child. If the parents are going to be dissatisfied because John is not promoted and will discuss the matter in his presence at home, there is likely to be a certain attitude set up that will prove disastrous for John's future happiness in the nursery group. In this case John should be promoted. The leader will always seek the best plan for each child. Often this "best" will be decided by means of friendly conferences or informal conversation of the leader and both parents.

Another problem connected with promotion is that of the youngest child in the family who does not wish the four-year-old brother or sister to go into another room. The leader should plan to build up the idea that the older brother or sister will be in the kindergarten but that Blanche will stay in the nursery class. Susan has been in nursery class for a long time. Blanche will stay and play until she is as big as Susan, then she will go into the kindergarten just as Susan goes to kindergarten today. If the younger child stages a temper tantrum to try to secure his own way, the leader will deal with him in a kind but firm manner. She will guard against yielding to his begging for the older child to stay down "just this one Sunday." This would merely create a situation that would have to be faced at a future time. Nothing is to be gained through such procedure.

Closely allied to this is the problem of the parent who does not wish two children in the family separated. Probably there is about a year's difference in their ages. The mother may explain, "They have always done everything together. We do not want them separated at church."

Neither child can progress at his own rhythm when thus hindered. The leader will be sympathetic, but firm. She will explain to the parents that the progress of the older child is retarded if he must always wait for the younger. The emo-

tional strain on the younger child is severe as he attempts to keep up with the older child. Neither has an opportunity to develop his own initiative, reach his own mental level, nor form friendships in his own age group.

The leader may point out the comparison in chronological ages of the children. This means that the four-year-old has lived a quarter of a lifetime longer than this three-year-old brother. For the best development of each, the leader will not permit the four-year-old to remain in the nursery class another year, nor will she advance the three-year-old to the kindergarten where he would be a complete misfit. It may require great patience and tact to help the parents to understand the problems involved and to be willing to adjust their opinions for the good of their children.

If each child in the group feels secure by promotion Sunday, the leader may know that she has succeeded in one major aim for nursery class work.

In those schools which have the fall promotion with general promotion Sunday throughout the church school, it is a wiser plan to promote the nursery children to the kindergarten on the Sunday following the general promotion in the church school. In this way the children who are promoted from the kindergarten to the primary department will leave the kindergarten on promotion Sunday. The five-year-old children who remain in the kindergarten may then be guided in conversation, by the leader, and will discuss ways in which they may welcome the new children who are to come from the nursery class. If this plan is followed, the nursery group will proceed as usual following their own activities in their own nursery class room. Early in the session on the following Sunday, those children who are to be promoted will be taken to the kindergarten where they will spend the entire session and so have a better opportunity to become adjusted in the new situation.

Attractive identification cards should be prepared for each child by the nursery class leader. A small card with the child's name on it and a gummed seal and ribbon bow may be ready. These can be pinned to the children who are to be promoted. They will serve as "badges" of recognition to the children as well as a welcome means of identification as the kindergarten teacher greets her new pupils.

If it is possible for the children who are being promoted to carry a bunch of flowers to their kindergarten friends, this would provide something of interest that the nursery class children might do for the older group, or the nursery children may select a favorite picture that they would like to take to the kindergarten to share with them for a few Sundays. This plan has the advantage of providing something familiar from the nursery class room for the children to recognize the first few Sundays after promotion.

Records of the Nursery Class

Records are most important for the leader of the nursery class. She will wish to have recorded for each child in her group the name, address, date of birth, date of enrollment, parents' names. The father's occupation is often a guide as to the educational and financial background of the home. The pastor of the church will probably wish as additional information the name of the church of which the parents are members and whether the child has been baptized. Duplicates of this record should be filed in the general church school file and also in the church record file where it may be available to the pastor.

The leader will find a loose-leaf notebook a valuable asset. One full page should be devoted to each child. At the top of the page the child's name, address and date of birth may be listed. Any reactions that are significant to the child's growth may be noted on the page over a period of months. This record will help the leader to note the mental and social development of each child. She may wish to note the regularity of attendance, although at no time should undue stress be placed on regular attendance of nursery class children.

THE NURSERY CLASS ROOM AND ITS EQUIPMENT

ENVIRONMENT is an important factor in the learning processes of a little child. The nursery class room should be arranged in as homelike a manner as possible. Everything in the room should be for the use, pleasure and development of the child as he grows religiously. He will need to be taught the proper use of some pieces of equipment as, for example, the piano.

The Room

If the nursery class leader could choose the room for her group, she would probably select one on the ground floor with southern exposure and many windows that could be opened for ventilation and whose clear glass would admit sunlight. These windows would be low enough for the children to look out of them. A long, low toy box with a hinged lid might be placed under the windows so that the children might climb up on it or use it to kneel on as they look out.

The room should be large enough to provide ample space for play but not so big as to overawe a small child. The government bulletin for nursery schools gives thirty-five square feet as the required floor space for each child. This is less than many nursery schools consider adequate. If thirty-five square feet of floor space is allowed as a basis for estimation, a room 18'x20' would accommodate not more than ten children, while a room 35'x18' could care adequately for not more than eighteen children. Nursery leaders in the church school recognize the fact that the younger the child the greater the amount of floor space necessary for informal procedure in religious growth. If the group numbered more than twenty children, the leader would prefer two smaller rooms rather than a single large room. She would probably choose cream or buff paint for the walls and ceiling, or a very delicate green might be selected.

In her selection of a room, the leader would prefer one that had an outside entrance through which the children might enter the room. This door might also be used for their frequent trips outdoors.

Near the room there should be a toilet room. The leader would prefer that this should be equipped with toilet facilities for little children. If this were impossible, she would select a low bench, platform, or box that might be fitted into the base of the toilet, and another at the washstand. Then the children could climb onto these benches.

To return to the nursery class room: there should be a closet, toy chest, or shelves that are low enough for the children to put away their own toys and select the toys that they desire. Part of this space should be reserved for any records, pictures, or books which the leader wishes to keep for her use.

SPACE FOR WRAPS

Where a cloak room is not available, there should be a low rack equipped with hangers or hooks placed low enough so that each child may hang his own wraps. These may be marked with individual identification tags.

CHAIRS

The posture chairs should be chosen in two sizes, eight inches and ten inches high. This provides for the rapid spurts of growth which are to be expected in the nursery class. If only one height is available, the eight-inch size is to be preferred. It would not be necessary to have enough chairs for each child, provided there was a rug on the floor or heavy linoleum on which small rugs might be scattered so that the children could sit on them. It is not likely that all the children would be seated at the same time. The nursery leader would not plan for this. She would prefer that the children be playing in small groups, some walking, some standing, others sitting on the floor.

PIANO

A piano is a valuable addition to the nursery class equipment. The small-size, or studio pianos, are quite satisfactory for this use, and nursery children enjoy having this piece of furniture more nearly their own size. However, if it is impossible to secure a piano, it will be better to have no musical instrument than to substitute an organ for use with voices of small children. A victrola and a few carefully selected records may add to the musical pleasure of the group.

TABLES

If space permits, low tables (twelve inches high) will provide splendid opportunities for playing "house." They may be used for the occasional lunch periods, as well as for looking at books and pictures and for play with smaller toys.

PICTURE SCREEN

The nursery leader will also find use for a picture-screen or dado. An eighteen-inch strip of cork or beaver board fastened to the wall not more than twenty-five inches from the floor will serve nicely. If beaver board is used, it may be shellacked or painted to tone in with the wall color. If it is covered, it will be necessary to remove the covering for frequent washing. Pictures may easily be thumb-tacked on the screen.

PAPER HANDKERCHIEFS

It is well to keep a supply of paper handkerchiefs easily available. These should be placed in a low drawer or on a closet shelf where the children can get them for themselves. The leader will encourage their use. The children may be reminded frequently of the place where they are kept and the suggestion offered that they are there to use when a handkerchief is needed.

PAPER NAPKINS

Paper napkins are also needed in the nursery class. Sometimes these may be cut into quarters and used as small nap-

kins when crackers or apples are served. Again, a whole paper napkin may serve as a pillow during the rest period.

SHEET, SMALL RUGS OR RESTING CLOTHS FOR THE REST PERIOD

A sheet or cotton blanket serves well for the rest period. It may be spread on the rug or on the gymnasium mattress. The children should not lie too close together during the rest period. The children may be told to place their pillows (paper napkins) on the sheet but to lie so that their feet will be off the sheet out on the rug.

Many nursery classes prefer individual mats for resting. These may be small inexpensive rag rugs and the child's name tag may be attached to each rug. They should be kept in a place where they will be protected from dust.

Still other schools feel that the expense of a rug is prohibitive and provide lengths of inexpensive material such as chintz. A yard to a yard and a quarter length is ample for a nursery class child. These also should carry identification tags. They may be placed on the rugs and with the paper napkin pillow provide an excellent resting space for the child. Most of the nursery classes having only an hour session will not need to consider resting rugs. Whatever type is used will need to be laundered frequently. They must be kept clean and sanitary.

Not all nursery leaders will be able to secure this equipment. It may be that the nursery class will meet in a screened or curtained corner of the kindergarten room. Perhaps they may even meet in a screened corner of a room in which all children up to twelve are having their church-school session. Such a nursery leader may find it possible to make a greater use of outdoor space either in the church yard or the yard of a neighbor who is willing to make this contribution to religious education.

The leader may find a porch in the neighborhood on which she can meet with her children. Such a porch, if inclosed, would probably provide meeting space for the greater part of the year, but would have to be abandoned during cold weather; or the leader may find a vacant room in a neighborhood home which could be admirably adapted as a nursery class room.

She will never resign herself to accepting the poorest equipment, neither will she complain nor blame poor work on inadequate equipment. She will make the best possible use of that equipment which she has and will strive continuously to better conditions for her group.

Toys

In the chart on page 203 the leader may discover possible values of some nursery class toys. She will notice that dolls, books, and blocks are mentioned as first essentials. She will decide what types of toys she wishes to select and will have certain standards for the selection.

The leader will avoid having so many toys that the room appears cluttered. Such a condition is confusing to children. A few well-chosen toys will prove of much greater value and of more lasting satisfaction than a motley assortment of carelessly selected playthings. No mechanical toys will *ever* be included in nursery class equipment.

There are certain standards for the selection of toys. First, everything in the nursery class room should be strong enough for real use. The test for equipment in many schools in general education is "Is this toy strong enough to support the weight of a man?" This test is applied to doll carriages, doll bed, and so on. The leader will remember that a doll carriage represents to the child a real carriage. For this reason he is likely to climb into the carriage himself or to persuade another child to squeeze into it. Less expensive toys are frequently of flimsy light construction that will not stand hard use. One good sturdy toy is of much greater value than several cheap ones.

A second test for toys, "Is it safe and sanitary?" This means careful investigation of all corners so that no sharp edges may escape notice and later cause a scratch on the child's hand. There will be no loose screws or bolts that may later be unscrewed and swallowed. When purchasing toys, the leader will be sure that they may be scrubbed, washed and, if necessary, subjected to more thorough methods of disinfecting.

BLOCKS

Many nursery class children will choose blocks Sunday after

Sunday and, through them, will express creative ideas. The blocks should be large enough for actual use. Straight lines are more satisfactory than curves. A few cylinders are good. The most frequently used size is probably the brick unit, that is a block approximately two by four by eight inches. There should be half bricks (two by four by four inches) and double and triple size bricks (two by four by sixteen inches, and two by four by twenty-four inches). The plain, unpainted blocks are less expensive and their creative value is as great for building as colored ones. If colored blocks are selected, the leader must be sure that the colors are painted with vegetable color paints that would be safe for the child and at the same time would withstand scrubbing and hard usage. Although sufficient blocks for a group of children is an expensive piece of equipment, their value warrants the purchase. One good set of blocks may be used for many years.

It is also possible for the leader to decide on the size most practical for her group and to secure these from a lumber yard, planing mill or sawmill. These blocks will have to be sandpapered to be free from splinters and rough edges. A box sufficiently large to contain the blocks should be included in the order.

DOLLS

Inexpensive dolls about eight to ten inches high are quite satisfactory with nursery children. If obtainable, rubber dolls with movable arms and legs are preferred. Rag dolls are good if they are washable. Frequently the dolls will need to be scrubbed and hung in the sunshine and air. An unbreakable doll or a stuffed doll with unbreakable head is also quite satisfactory.

The dolls may be dressed in plain dresses or rompers that are fastened with snaps, zippers or buttons large enough for the children to manage for themselves, as one of the greatest joys of doll play is that of dressing and undressing the dolls. There should be a quantity of doll blankets. Many children prefer an undressed doll wrapped in several blankets. The doll clothes and blankets will need to be washed and ironed every two or three weeks. It is wise to make the clothes by a simple pattern

from dainty prints, crepes or inexpensive materials which can be laundered easily. Market baskets may be fitted out as bassinets. Oatmeal cartons may be made into small beds, or other doll beds may be provided.

A few housekeeping toys should be included for the doll center. There may be dishes large enough to be used, a small pitcher, a broom, toy telephone; in fact, the nursery leader may find many housekeeping toys. She will select carefully from the display in toy departments.

BALLS

Brightly colored balls are easily found in the grass when used for outdoor play and are great fun when rolled back and forth on the rug. Large balls, those six to eight inches in diameter, are favorites with the children. Bean bags may also be used. Like all other pieces of equipment, these should not be used after they are soiled. They are inexpensive and may be replaced frequently.

OTHER TOYS

Floor trains that interlock (without wheels), pull toys, color cones and other fascinating toys manufactured by such houses as Holgate, Play Skool, Fisher-Price, Educational Playthings, are sturdy, sanitary and of educational value in the nursery class. Small toys such as the rubber or wooden trucks and wagons afford great pleasure. Metal toys are the least desirable because of rough sharp edges or loose screws.

A sturdy box large enough for the children to climb into and out of may be sandpapered and painted or varnished. This unit of equipment may provide still greater possibilities if large rubber casters are put on the bottom of it so that it may be pushed and pulled as a wagon as well as climbed into and out of. If space permits, it might be well to have one or two other boxes large enough to hide behind or to climb into. These may be used indoors in the nursery class room or outdoors.

Steps have great fascination for young children and provide for muscular activity. A set of small steps may be secured for the class room. Such a flight of steps may lead to a small

platform and be placed under a window when the window is too high for the children to look out of when on the floor.

LARGER EQUIPMENT

When skilled leadership, ample space, and generous finances warrant its purchase, a slide may become a valuable piece of equipment. The slide should be low, about thirty-six inches high. It provides exercise for the larger muscles and is of real value as a conversation center. Frequently there is an opportunity for prayer as the children rejoice in good times together. Great self-restraint is required to wait a turn, but even a low slide requires constant supervision and there will be no religious value unless the person who supervises the slide realizes such possibilities and is skilled in the technique of living with and guiding little children.

Wagons and tricycles afford excellent opportunities for taking turns. They may be included in the equipment where space provides.

Another piece of larger equipment of doubtful value in a church school nursery class is the sand table. The only possible use of the sand table is for manipulative play. It affords the joy of feeling the sand trickle through the fingers or of filling and emptying small boxes, cans, cartons, or toy trucks; but a sand table requires close supervision. The leader will need to guard against the danger of children throwing sand in one another's eyes or hair, or rubbing their own eyes when their hands are covered with sand and so set up an irritation. There is the need to help children learn that sand is kept in the sand table. It is almost impossible to keep sand in a sanitary condition indoors. Outdoor sand boxes exposed to sun and rain are far less dangerous. Indoor boxes must have the sand replaced frequently, at least once a month. The physical hazard and the necessary supervision makes this a piece of equipment that is not recommended for nursery groups.

Books

Picture books are a necessary part of the nursery class equipment. These should be chosen with the greatest care. Some may be ten-cent editions but in all nursery classes there should

be one or two really good books. When one page of a book is torn, it is well either to remove that entire page or to dispose of the book. The attraction of a torn page for the three-year-old child, the joy of hearing the sound of such tearing and of manipulative experience of further tearing are likely to result in all pages in the book being torn and may cause the child to destroy other books. One way to teach care for books is to remove the temptation to tear.

The interest of the little child should be considered. His interests center around his home, food, toys, clothing, pets, play and other children. Usually he prefers that these children be doing something.

The pictures in the book should be clear. Black and white photographs are excellent. The text will rarely be read in the church school, but the pictures may be enjoyed with a running conversational form of story. The following brief bibliography is suggested for leaders who wish to build up a library for nursery class children.

A copy each of the four parts of *My Book* should be included in the children's library: *My Book for Fall*, Part I; *My Book for Winter*, Part II; *My Book for Spring*, Part III; *My Book for Summer*, Part IV.

Association for Childhood Education, *Sung Under the Silver Umbrella*; Baruch, Dorothy W., *The Two Bobbies*, *I Know a Surprise*, *I Like Animals*; Bryan, Dorothy and Marguerite, *Michael Who Missed His Train*; Flack, Marjorie, *Angus and the Ducks*; Gay, Romney, *Toby and Sue*; Marsh, Lucile, *Happy Days*; Martin, Mary S., *The First Picture Book*; Mitchell, Lucy Sprague, *Here and Now Story Book*, *Another Here and Now Story Book*; *The Real Mother Goose*, illustrated by Blanche Fisher Wright.

Among the ten-cent books that are recommended are: *Baby's First Book* and *My First Animal Book*.

The old favorites, *The Three Little Kittens*, *Little Black Sambo*, *Peter Rabbit* and *Child's Garden of Verses* are also obtainable in these less expensive editions.

Pictures

"Let me see! Let me see!" Three-year-old Judy reached out for the picture that the nursery class teacher held in her hand. It was passed to Judy, then David wanted to see it and so did Ruth. *Seeing* meant holding the picture. "David won't let me see it," complained Ruth, although David was holding the picture directly in front of her. To the casual observer,

Ruth could not help seeing it. David was encouraged to look at it then pass it to Ruth so that she might have her turn to "see" it before she passed it to Bobby.

Pictures for use with nursery children should be carefully mounted on a serviceable background so that the children can handle as they wish and may really see them. Some leaders protect good prints by placing them in an inexpensive picture frame. The back may be removed and different pictures substituted. Another type of frame is a homemade one made from cardboard and pliofilm. The cardboard should be cut about one-fourth inch longer and wider than the the picture that is to be shown. Plioform, a transparent paper product, should be cut two inches wider and one inch longer than the cardboard. This allows for turning back one inch of the pliofilm on each of three sides to be glued on the cardboard. The picture may then be slipped in the one end of this frame that has been left unsealed, and the children can handle it with no danger of its being soiled.

Another frame may be made from a large manila envelope. These envelopes may be secured at any stationery or office supply store. With a sharp knife the center of the envelope may be cut out leaving the effect of a frame. Pictures may then be mounted on cardboard or paper and slipped into the envelope. This frame will withstand much use and may always be replaced by a new one.

Nursery class leaders will avoid having too many pictures in the room. It is better to have a few good pictures and to change them as needed. Perhaps one or two may be framed and may become part of the permanent equipment. Margaret Tarrant's "Suffer Little Children to Come Unto Me" and a good Madonna picture are suggested as religious topics. The leader may also wish to include a picture of nursery class children at play. All pictures in the nursery class room should be placed low on the wall on a level with the eyes of the nursery child as he stands before them. Probably this will be about thirty-two inches from the floor.

In the selection of pictures for nursery children, the leader will consider the interests of the little child. They should be large enough for him to see clearly, and there should be no confusing details or blurred background.

Magazine pictures, advertisements, and other good child subject pictures may be mounted and kept in a reserve file. The pictures should be placed on a screen or dado so that they may be thumb-tacked for temporary use. It is unwise to paste or glue them on the wall as this will mar the finish of the wall when the pictures are removed.

The nursery child is interested in his home, his food, his play, and the things that he can do. He enjoys his toys, his pets and other children. His interest in pictures centers around these same things. There is a slight preference for colored pictures, but their preference by this group is not so great as most adults have thought. A test with a large number of nursery children in general education showed that 53 per cent chose colored pictures while 47 per cent selected the same subjects in black and white photographs. When colored pictures are used, the leader will select them with care. She will avoid clashing brilliancy and soft tints. She will select pure color.

A picture molding about twenty-five inches above the floor is excellent for placing framed pictures or those that have been mounted on heavy paper or cardboard. The children are then free to explore and experiment and enjoy themselves. They cannot help but learn from pictures thus placed within their reach.

In a selection of permanent pictures for the nursery class room, it is well to try them out first with the children to discover whether they really enjoy the pictures or whether their joy has been largely influenced by adult standards. Because of a little child's interest in babies, a Madonna picture is usually a favorite. The Gran Duca Madonna holds first place with several nursery groups, but the leader may wish to secure copies of the Gran Duca Madonna and other Madonnas and make her choice of the permanent pictures from the ones that arouse greatest interest from the children when they are free to admire without adult urging. Some nursery workers have thoughtlessly placed the "Infant Samuel" among the pictures for nursery children. There is danger of confusion from the use of this picture. It is not a story that we would tell to the nursery child and should be reserved until the child is old enough for this story.

Most other Bible pictures should be reserved for kinder-

garten or primary age. Then, when the child hears a story and sees a picture, he has a keener appreciation for both and a fresh interest is brought to the enjoyment of both.

Pictures may be placed on the screen or dado for use, or they may be mounted in a scrapbook, or three or four of related interests, such as children playing outdoors in winter or children on a sled, may be mounted and placed on a table. This use would correspond with that of a browsing table of books for older children.

Sometimes there is value in pointing to the objects in a story. This gives a definite sensory experience. It may help to recall some activity that puts meaning into the picture. The greatest value in the use of pictures comes when the leader enjoys a picture with one child or a very small group of not more than three children. Waiting to hold the picture so that he may really see it exhausts the patience of a little child if he has to wait too long for his turn. The leader will never seek to use a picture with a large group of children.

Nursery class leaders will seek to vary the methods by which they show pictures to children. Several different methods may be used as the needs, the abilities and the limitations of picture appreciation vary with different children.

PLAY, GAMES, ACTIVITIES, STORIES AND MUSIC

Play

PLAY is the most important teaching method with nursery class children because of the opportunities afforded to help him gain wide experience, social development, physical skills, and emotional control. What kind of play shall the leader encourage in the church school?

The profit from play in nursery class will depend largely upon the richness of the child's environment in the church school, but more upon the skill with which the leader helps him to become acquainted with the other children and with the possibilities and the limitations of his environment. As always, there will be informality in the play of the nursery class. Interest centers should be set up and toys arranged so that the child is attracted to them when he enters the room. The child will be given a choice of activities. He will select those toys that he desires to use, but the leader may encourage his choice. She will need to redirect types of play that might be harmful to him or to other children.

There should be very few rules, but necessary ones should be strictly enforced. The rules should be so simple that the children themselves can understand the need for having them. For example, "We *build* with the blocks. We *roll* balls." This is a positive expression that should help the child, but he may need to be taught also "We do not throw blocks." When there is a slide in the nursery class room, it will be necessary for the children to understand that they go *up* the steps and *down* the slide. Usually these directions will need to be repeated many times, but gradually the children set them as standards for other children in the group.

Younger children will find their greatest interest in toys that invite individual attention. Two or three children may play

with the blocks, but they are not playing together. Their individual interests have caused them to select similar types of play. This is characteristic of the young child. He plays alone and follows his own interests even when surrounded by other children.

The leader must be fair and must know exactly what is happening in each group. Sometimes she may suggest that Billy has had the floor train a long time and now it is Sarah's turn. When Billy gives the floor train to Sarah, Sarah will be encouraged to say "Thank you, Billie." This makes a happy memory for the next sharing experience. Susan may have decided to look at the books. She gathers several together and sits at the table just holding them. Peggy wishes to look at a book and grabs it from Susan. Each child tries to defend his rights. It is only as the leader interprets the fair and the right way to use the books that she helps to establish the standards for right use. These standards will not be completely established during the nursery period. Some children will be slower in adjusting socially than others. Social immaturity should be recognized and the child should not be considered deliberately naughty when he is really socially immature.

Occasionally there is a child who seems to enjoy disturbing the play of others. He does not co-operate. He does not enter into play, but he disturbs other children who are having happy friendly times together. Such a disturber may need to be isolated from the group for a few minutes. He should be taken away from the other children, either into another room, possibly a nearby rest room, or over on the other side of the nursery class room. There should be some toys available for him. He will be given the explanation "When a child cannot play nicely with the other children, he must play alone for a while." A very few minutes of play alone usually makes the nearness to the group desirable even though he is still enough of an individual not to care to join group play. He likes to be near the group while playing. The leader will probably say "Freddie, I am sure you are ready to play nicely with the other girls and boys now. Let us go over and build with the blocks and watch to see what the other children are doing."

Sometimes the children seem to upset the play scheme, but it is not intentional disturbance. Three or four of the three-

year-old children may be playing with the dolls and the chairs. Alice decides to play with this group also. She goes over to the group and sits on one of the chairs. She does not know that that chair is Marion's bed. The other children remonstrate. If any of the children have been playing at home with an older group, it is likely that we shall hear, "You can't play with us. This is our house and we don't want you." But this reaction is only the result of imitation. If the children have been playing with others their own age, they are more likely to scold Alice for sitting on Marion's bed, then Alice may be taken into the group play or she may be left to stand and watch. The leader may help here if she suggests that Alice play that she has come to visit the others, or Alice may be encouraged to get another doll from the toy chest and join the housekeeping play.

The children at play reproduce many of the activities they see or hear at home. If a carpenter or plumber or electrician has been in the home during the week, there are likely to be several carpenters or plumbers or electricians in nursery class. Perhaps one child will start the imitation of the work that he has seen at home and another child may follow the same imitative play, develop it his own way and not know what the first child has started.

The younger children in the group will often watch as the three-and-a-half-year-olds begin to play together. Donald and Marvin and Charles may build tunnels through which their trains pass. They may construct a roundhouse for the engine or a garage where the cars may be parked, but this type of co-operative play usually will not be found with the younger children. Each of them would build his own tunnel or his own garage. He has not yet learned to co-operate with others in a community tunnel or garage. The simple game of "Ring Rosy" will often attract younger children, but not all have reached the place where they wish to join even with this very simple form of group play. Sometimes the shy or retiring children may need to be encouraged. Occasionally one will stand on the fringe of the group and will do just as the children who are at play are doing. This child is not unco-operative. He probably wishes that he could join the others, but he cannot get himself to the place where he will be absorbed by the group. Group play should not be forced. It should even be

guarded against when there is any danger of overstimulation and excitement. Nursery class play experiences should be as natural and homelike and friendly and happy as possible.

The leader offers sufficient variety to keep the children from becoming bored, but encourages each child to continue one interest long enough to gain pleasureable result from it. This continued interest is most desirable, otherwise we find the child who flits from one interest to another without continuing any for a long enough period of time to gain from the experience.

As the leader watches the different interest groups, she may slip from one to another. She will let the group absorb her. She will not force herself upon them. She does not feel that she must "teach this lesson today" and so impose herself upon the group. She watches and waits. When an opportunity presents itself, she is alert. She realizes the many learning situations that are offered through play. Sometimes a learning situation is in the right use of the toys, sometimes in learning to share or to wait turns. Sometimes it is in being happy together and from such happy situations the thank-you song or a prayer may develop.

Games

THE "GET-ACQUAINTED" GAME: An excellent way of getting acquainted and of helping the children to learn each other's names is for the leader to sit on the rug with three or four of the children and to ask, "Can you find Mary's ear?" One of the children will be sure to touch Mary's ear. This will be continued with, "Can you find Paul's foot? Bob's hand? Betty's nose?" and so on.

BALL ROLLING: Bright-colored balls are always favorites with the children. There may be several variations of rolling the ball. It may be rolled from the leader to a child, back to the leader and to another child, to develop the idea of taking turns, or several children may sit on the floor with legs extended and roll the ball from one to another, each one calling the name of the child to whom the ball is to be rolled. This is another excellent way of getting acquainted, or there may be just the rolling back and forth between two children. The greatest value in this is that of drawing out the shy or bashful child who may be willing to co-operate with one child but is not ready to enter the group.

RING ROSY: Ring Rosy is an old familiar favorite. It is perhaps the first and best-liked group game that we may expect the nursery child to enjoy. Long before he shows any interest in group play or will co-operate with other children in any other way, he may join the circle for Ring Rosy. It

is well to insist that the feet be kept on the floor when they fall down together.

TEETER-TOTTER: With arms extended the children bend to right and left, to represent a teeter-totter, as the words of the song on page 219 are sung.

SKIPPING: Three-year-old children find great pleasure in trying to skip. This provides an activity in which several may engage at one time. It must be remembered that nursery children lack co-ordination of the muscles. It is only occasionally that we will find a child in the nursery class who can really skip. But great pleasure is derived from trying. The skip will resemble a run, a step or a one-legged hop, but with encouragement and frequent showing (without urging) the leader may help the children to know what skipping really means, and eventually may see a child accomplish this activity as he approaches his fourth birthday.

LEAVES ARE FALLING: While singing the words of the song (see page 219), the children twirl around and fall to the floor.

SNOWMAN: This game is sung to the words of "The Snowman" page 223). The children stand with arms extended or over head as they start to sing. Gradually they melt away until they are lying flat on the rug by the time they reach the last words, "see him go."

Frequently it is possible to plan this game just before rest period, and the last time the children melt they may lie and listen to quiet music for a few minutes.

GETTING READY FOR NURSERY CLASS: This game is a variation of an old favorite. It may be sung to the tune of "Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush." The children will suggest different ways that they get ready to come to nursery class. Then the song will be sung as they play these preparations. For example, "This is the way we wash our face, this is the way we comb our hair, this is the way we brush our teeth, this is the way we put on our stockings, this is the way we put on our clothes, this is the way we drink our milk," and so on. With a little encouragement the children will offer suggestions of their preparations.

FOLLOW THE LEADER: This is one of the very simple games which may be played in the nursery class. It is great fun to follow some person around the room, behind the piano, winding past chairs, up and down the slide, or around in circles. Frequently the children will initiate and play the game without giving it any name. Three or four of them may start off after someone who happens to be the leader of that particular group. It is great fun when there is a small limited outdoor space where steps are available so that the children may run up one step and jump down and then around in a circle. Encourage initiative in playing the game.

Activities

Through play and supervised activities in the nursery class the little child is helped to continue his educative discoveries. The nursery class is one more new experience, added to the

many experiences that have come to the child ever since he gave his first cry. It is well to have a few definite activities planned, but many will arise during the year and the leader will avail herself of any activity that she feels will contribute to the religious nurture of the children.

During the fall there may be a walk outdoors to admire the color of the foliage or to walk through the leaves and hear the rustling sound, or to see the fall flowers in a neighboring garden. In the winter time there is a possibility of enjoying snowflakes or even a few minutes of play in the snow making tracks. There is the activity of feeding the birds. Christmas offers varied activities such as gifts that may be wrapped for the sexton or the minister or cards that may be "signed." February brings valentine making, and perhaps a valentine may be sent to the primary friends who may have planned surprises for the nursery class through the year. One group had the activity of children spreading a simple confectioners sugar icing on small crackers and then making animal crackers to stand on this icing. This provided a "party" for kindergarten friends when the animal parade was arranged by the children on pink paper napkins.

The policeman on the corner who directs traffic on Sunday morning is a friend to whom the children may wave if they are out on the lawn, or he may be invited to come over to the group some morning. The leader will need to confer with him previously regarding such a plan. He may explain to the children how he holds up his hand. Perhaps he will show them that when he lifts his hand it means "Wait a minute" and when he motions to them it means "Go ahead."

One group made frequent visits to a shut-in who lived next to the church. This shut-in was Eleanor's great-grandmother. One Sunday the children picked some of the pansies and carried them to her. They told her about their toys and about their flowers. She was a cheery old lady, and after the first visit the group went frequently to see her and sometimes carried a few toys. Sometimes they just chatted with her or sang one of their songs.

A visit to the church sanctuary provides an opportunity for the children to see the place where mother and daddy attend service. If the church has chimes, it will be well to stop outside

and listen to them. The children may not see the bells, but they can hear them and they may look up at the tower where the bells hang. A visit to the sexton in the furnace room may be another valuable activity. Such experiences help to establish a sense of security. The children begin to feel at home.

During the summer there may be trips into the outdoors, perhaps a visit to a garden, a walk to a neighboring yard where a flower bed may be enjoyed and talked about. There are bees and birds and butterflies to see and trees where the children may sit in the shade as they talk together. Later there may be tiny cones, acorns, or other nuts that might be gathered from under the trees.

The leader in a city church offered the criticism that many nursery workers talked about outdoor possibilities for their groups. She insisted that she could not go outdoors, therefore the suggestions would be of no value to her. But, during the weeks that she was away, the assistant who took her place found a florist's shop just around the corner from the church. The children were taken there on a visit. The florist showed them his ice box case filled with flowers. The children had a delightful time. They could smell some of the blossoms and even touch a few.

The same assistant took her group on another Sunday to look at the baby chicks in a store window just three buildings beyond the church. Later she found a small space four feet long and just one foot wide. It was outside the nursery window. It was only dry brown earth but with the help of the sexton she spaded and raked it, then helped the children to plant nasturtium seed and to set out a few pansy plants. The children watched the seed grow. They picked the blossoms from the pansies and they experienced great joy in this activity with flowers. Later in the summer they picked a bunch of nasturtiums, arranged them in a vase and placed the vase in the church sanctuary. From this activity the children seemed to gain a sense of having helped to do something for their church.

The leader needs to guard against activities which will prove too great a strain for small undeveloped muscles. She will not give color work nor pictures to crayon where the children must keep within lines or spoil the final result. All crayon work will be freehand with large crayon or chalk on large

sheets of paper or a blackboard. She will not give the children scissors for cutting except under supervision, perhaps, for use as they cut flowers.

So through carefully planned activities the leader in the nursery class helps to supply a growing religious opportunity and to establish a sense of security for the child, and the nursery class becomes a place for educative discoveries.

AN EVALUATION OF SOME NURSERY CLASS TOYS

RELIGIOUS VALUES	SOCIAL VALUES	PHYSICAL VALUES
<hr/>		
* DOLLS—WITH REMOVABLE CLOTHES AND BLANKETS (INCLUDING TOY CATS, DOGS, AND TEDDY BEARS)	Sharing, taking turns, beginning to play together in small groups, bringing doll from home and letting others play with it.	Handling carefully, dressing and undressing, carrying around.
<hr/>		
BLOCKS	BLOCKS	BLOCKS
* Basis for innumerable good times together as garages, roads, churches, towers, houses, chairs, and so on, are built. Frequent conversation-center. Many opportunities afforded for waiting for use of certain blocks, learning not to hold too long, nor retain too many, learning to return blocks to box or chest after use. Weekly center of interest adds stimuli for creative expression.		
<hr/>		
BOOKS	BOOKS	BOOKS
* Pictures may lead to stories—as Christmas Story, or Jesus and the Children. Associated with home activities, play and other children develop sense of security.	Enjoying together, sharing, taking turns, conversation center, opportunity to show favorite book brought from home.	Manipulation—learning to handle with care. Suggestions as to specific activity or play.
<hr/>		
BALLS	BALLS	BALLS
* Help in developing sense of security as this favorite home toy is associated with church school. First discovery of this as a friendly place may be through ball play. Fun and joy.	Rolling to one another as a means of learning names. Enjoying together. Means whereby older children may show friendliness to younger.	Manipulation—muscular control of arm muscles. Coordination of arms and legs.

HOUSEKEEPING TOYS	HOUSEKEEPING TOYS	HOUSEKEEPING TOYS
† Follow home patterns. Provide opportunities for conversation, stories, songs.	Playing in small groups. Taking share of certain responsibilities. Discussion as to ways of housekeeping.	Motor control. Learning to use some toys in right ways, as broom, sweeper, dishes, and so on.
SMALL TOYS	SMALL TOYS	SMALL TOYS
(These include small rubber autos, color cone, floor train, and other educational toys.)		
† May be basis for discovering friendly world beyond home. Give confidence to child—sense of security—here are toys similar to his toys at home.	Conversation center, opportunity for discovering friends in church school. Need for sharing.	Manipulation—distinguishing colors, and definitely planning use for toys.
SLIDE	SLIDE	SLIDE
‡ Religious values are evident only under skilled leadership—then this may be center for conversation, songs, and prayers.	Opportunities for taking turns, waiting for one another. Conversation center.	Exercise for larger muscles.

A slide needs constant supervision and should never be included in equipment unless skilled leadership is available.

* First essentials.

† Second buying.

‡ When skilled leadership is available and finances warrant.

Stories

Stories for three-year-olds probably have little teaching value compared with activities. However, the nursery class leader wishes to know where she may find stories to be used in the nursery class. The leader will read nursery stories in current magazines, both denominational publications and magazines for general education. She will find a few books with simple stories that are suitable for nursery children, but the stories that prove of greatest interest are the original ones made up to fit the particular situation as it arises. The story for the nursery child is not really a story in a structural sense as we have always thought of stories. Rather it is a series of statements about one incident.

The nursery child is most interested in the stories that repeat experiences in his everyday life. Such stories will center about his play, his dressing and undressing, bathing, eating. He is interested in father and mother and their play with him. He is interested in the baby in the home, in his toys, swing and sandbox. He is interested in grandmother's visit.

Often the story may take the form of a running conversation with a child or with a group of two or three children. Sometimes this conversational story will be developed as the group play together or as they walk or play outdoors. The story may grow as a picture is examined. Usually the stories in the book will need to be adapted to meet the situation. When names of the children in the group are substituted for the names of the children in the story, or the particular toy or activity is mentioned in which the child's present interest centers, the value of the story is greatly enhanced.

Whether the story is a conversation or a short description of activities, or whatever the form, the sentence structure will be simple, the words carefully chosen and within the vocabulary of the child. There will be avoidance of all confusing details. Sound words such as "pitter-patter" of rain, the "ke-tro-tk, ke-tro-tk" of the donkey's feet add interest to the story. Repetition helps, as does the naming of familiar objects. The story should be told with a certain rhythmic form. The leader will seek for words that best describe in a vivid way that which she wishes to express.

The same story may be used on two successive Sundays or even on every Sunday during a month if the interests and need of the children warrant such use. The same story may be told several times on one Sunday, or the leader may tell the story for one or two Sundays and repeat the same story a few weeks later. Little children welcome the familiar.

There will be many Sundays when no story will be told. The story is not the lesson. It is just one small part, one incident in the morning's teaching opportunities. As the story fits into the playing and sharing and talking together, it has its place in the procedure; isolated, it is valueless. The practice of forms of conduct, for example the practice of sharing and taking turns, is of much greater value to the little child than listening to stories about them. Occasionally there may be a

Sunday on which the leader tells five or six different stories to as many different groups or individuals.

Because of the limited experience of three-year-old children, there are no Old Testament stories that are suggested for use with the nursery child and only a few New Testament stories are within his understanding and interest. The Christmas story, "Caring for the Baby Jesus," "Jesus and the Children" and the incidents of Jesus and the flowers and birds may be told. These stories may be repeated over and over again.

The leader learns to prepare stories for nursery children by telling them. She will study her children and learn their greatest interests. Then she will try to write short stories for the children. It requires effort to condense a story. The sentences must be short. Each word must be tested. Will the word be familiar to the child? Has it a pleasant sound? The child has a greater listening vocabulary and understands many more words than he uses when he talks, but the leader will select the words carefully so that there are not many unfamiliar ones in any one story. She will keep constantly in mind the fact that the limited experience of the nursery child and his home-centered and self-centered interests must be her guides as she plans stories for him.

On the following pages there are a few of the stories which are included in *My Book*, Parts I, II, III, IV. In addition, there are a few stories to help establish a feeling of security in certain situations, and other stories to help in the development of appreciation for some of God's gifts.

JIMMIE'S NEW HOUSE

(*A story to help establish security when a nursery class child moves into a new home*)

Jimmie watched the big truck.
It backed up in front of a new house.
Mother and daddy and baby sister and Jimmie
Were going to live in the new house.
It would be their new home.
Jimmie saw the men carry in
Their dining room table
And baby sister's crib.
Then he saw them carry in
His big box of blocks, and daddy's big chair.
Then they carried in Jimmie's bed.

Jimmy ran into the house.
 He looked in the living room.
 It did not look like home yet.
 But there was the radio, and baby sister's play pen.
 He looked in the little bedroom.
 That didn't look like home yet.
 But there were his bed and his blocks,
 And a box of his books.
 "It *is* my new house," said Jimmie.
 "It *is* my new house."
 "Yes, Jimmie Boy," called daddy.
 "It *is* our new home.
 And see the nice porch where
 Baby sister and you can play."
 "I *like* my new home," said Jimmie.
 "I *do* like my new home. Only it's so new."
 "Yes," said daddy, "But
 After a while you will go to sleep
 In your own bed, in our new home.
 Then when you waken up,
 It will be our really truly home,
 With mother and daddy and baby sister and Jimmie Boy,
 And we will all be happy together
 In our new home."

BOBBY'S JACK-O'-LANTERN

(A story to be used at Halloween to help the children enjoy the fun and overcome fear of
Jack-O'-Lanterns)

Daddy brought home a great big pumpkin.
 Mother said,
 "Just right for a Jack-O'-Lantern."
 Daddy and mother and Bobby went out on the back step.
 Daddy took his big knife
 And cut off the top of the pumpkin.
 Then daddy and mother and Bobby
 Took big spoons and dug out
 All the nice, slippery, yellow, "pumpkiny" inside
 And the big slippery seeds.
 They dug and dug and dug,
 Till daddy said, "There. That's just right."
 Then daddy took his big knife again.
 He cut a big eye, like this Δ
 Then he cut another big eye, like this Δ
 Bobby clapped his hands and danced up and down.
 "An eye," sang Bobby, "and another eye!"
 Then daddy cut a long nose like this Δ
 It looked so funny.

Bobby and mother laughed and laughed.
 Then daddy cut a mouth
 That turned way up at each corner
 And had teeth—one, two, three teeth!
 It looked just like this 
 It was a mouth that laughed!
 Then Bobby carried the Jack-O'-Lantern
 Very, very carefully.
 He put it on the table by the front window.
 "How will the children see
 Our Jack-O'-Lantern at night?" asked Bobby.
 "We will put an electric light inside," said mother.
 "Goody, goody, goody." Bobby clapped his hands.
 When mother put the light inside,
 The Jack-O'-Lantern looked so happy.
 He looked like this. 

The following rhyme may be said to the child while he is playing with the Jack-O'-Lantern. It gives him a mastery over what might be terrifying to him.

MY JACK-O'-LANTERN

My little Jack-O'-Lantern
 Is such a funny fellow.
 My mother cut a face for him
 On a pumpkin round and yellow.

ETHEL L. SMITHER

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DOWN BY THE WATER

Mary Lou and mother sat on the sand.
 They watched the big waves,
 Come in and go out,
 Come in and go out.
 They watched the little waves
 Run far up on the sand.
 Mary Lou took off her shoes and stockings
 And ran into the water.
 Splash, splash, splash
 Went the water over Mary Lou's feet.
 "Oh, oh, oh," cried Mary Lou.
 "The water is cold."
 Mary Lou dug in the sand.
 She made pies and cakes, and dug deep, deep holes.
 Then Mary Lou snuggled up close to mother.
 They watched the big waves
 Come in and go out,

Come in and go out.
They watched the little waves
Run far up on the sand.
Mary Lou began to sing. She sang:
“He made it. He made it.
God made the sea.”

THE RAINY DAY

“Pitter patter, pitter patter, pitter patter.”
The raindrops fell on the roof.
“Pitter patter, pitter patter, pitter patter,”
The raindrops splashed against the window pane.
“Pitter patter, pitter patter, pitter patter,”
The raindrops fell
On the grass and trees and flowers.
Patsy and Allen watched the raindrops
Splash against the window pane.
“I like the rain,” said Patsy.
“It sings a pitter patter song.”
“I like the rain too,” said Allen.
“And I like the rain,” said mother.
“It makes the trees all nice and clean.”
“It makes the grass pretty and green,”
Said Patsy.
“It makes the flowers grow,” said Allen.
Mother closed her eyes. She said,
“Thank you, God, for the beautiful outdoors.
We are glad for the rain to wash the leaves
And make the grass green and make the flowers grow.
And Patsy and Allen both said,
“Thank you, thank you, God.”

THANK YOU, GOD

Mother and daddy and Bobby
Sat down at the table for lunch.
Daddy bowed his head
And closed his eyes.
Mother bowed her head, too.
Bobby looked at daddy.
He looked at mother.
Then Bobby put his hands together
And bowed his head
And closed his eyes.
Daddy said,
“Thank you, God, for this good food. Amen.”
Bobby looked all around the table. Then he said,
“Thank you, God. Amen.”

DADDY TELLS ME THE CHRISTMAS STORY

Peggy liked to hear daddy tell stories.
 She liked to sit on daddy's lap and listen.
 One night daddy lighted a Christmas candle.
 Peggy watched the candle burn as daddy told her
 About Jesus, the Christmas Baby.
 Daddy said,
 "It was Christmas night.
 There were stars and stars and stars
 Shining in the blue sky.
 Mother Mary held her little tiny baby
 Close in her arms.
 His name was Jesus.
 Christmas is his birthday,
 God had sent the little baby to Mother Mary.
 She wrapped him in warm clothes.
 She sang,
 'Sleep my little Jesus,
 Sleep, my baby, sleep.'
 And Jesus, the little tiny baby, fell fast asleep."²⁰

THE LITTLE BABY

It was Christmas night.
 A mother held her little baby in her arms.
 The Baby's name was Jesus.
 Christmas is His birthday.
 Jesus' mother heard happy voices singing.
 "Joy, joy, joy, be happy, happy, happy,"
 They sang.
 Jesus' mother was happy.
 She hugged her little baby close to her.
 She wrapped him in a long, warm blanket
 And sang him to sleep.

CARING FOR THE BABY JESUS

Mother Mary held her little baby close in her arms.
 The little baby was Jesus.
 They were going far away.
 The mother and her little baby
 Rode on a donkey.
 Father Joseph walked beside them.
 "Ke-trotk, ke-trotk, ke-trotk,"
 Went the donkey's feet on the hard ground.
 "Ke-trotk, ke-trotk, ke-trotk."
 Sometimes the little Jesus smiled
 Just like all little babies.

Sometimes he cooed, sometimes he slept.
 Sometimes his mother, Mary, sang to him,
 "Sleep my little Jesus,
 Sleep, my baby, sleep."

GOING TO SEE JESUS

(To accompany picture by Margaret Tarrant)

One day Mary and Miriam and Martha,
 Joel and John and little Ruth,
 And their mothers,
 All went to see Jesus.
 Ruth took her doll, too.
 Jesus was talking to
 Ever so many grown people.
 But he smiled at Mary and Miriam and Martha,
 Joel and John and little Ruth
 And her doll.
 He lifted little Ruth, and carried her in his arms.
 Miriam had some flowers she had picked.
 She gave them to Jesus.
 Jesus put his hand on Martha's head.
 He said: "I love all little children,
 I want all little children to love me."
 Mary and Martha and Miriam,
 Joel and John and little Ruth, and their mothers,
 Were so glad that they had gone to see Jesus.
 Little Ruth was glad that she had taken her doll, too.

JESUS AND THE CHILDREN

One day Jesus was talking
 To ever so many grown people.
 There were some little children there too.
 They ran around and played.
 Some of them picked some flowers
 To give to Jesus.
 Then the little children went over close to Jesus.
 Jesus lifted a little baby in his arms.
 He put his hand on a little girl's head.
 He smiled as he said,
 "Let all the little children
 Come to me."
 The children were glad that their mothers
 Had taken them to see Jesus.

JESUS AND THE BIRDS

"Tweet, tweet, tweet,"
 Sang the birds as they flew up in the air.

Jesus was talking to many, many people.
 He heard the birds singing.
 "Look at the birds," Jesus said,
 "They fly around and sing.
 When they are hungry, they look for food.
 God, your Heavenly Father, makes food grow for them.
 Your Heavenly Father feeds them.
 He cares for the birds.
 God, your Heavenly Father, cares for you, too.
 He loves you."

JESUS AND THE FLOWERS

One day some children were playing
 Where there were ever so many flowers.
 The children picked some
 Red and yellow and pink and purple and white flowers.
 They gave them to Jesus.
 Jesus said,
 "Look at these pretty flowers,
 Red and yellow and pink and purple and white.
 God made them grow.
 The cool rain gave the flowers a drink.
 The yellow sunshine warmed them."
 Then Jesus said,
 "God cares for the flowers.
 He loves us, too."

Music

Singing is natural to a little child. We often hear him humming or singing as he plays around home or in the nursery class. He often makes up his own words and sings them in an original way to an original tune. These snatches of song may be jotted down and used to write songs that the children will enjoy using.

"Happy, happy, happy,
 Thank you, thank you, thank you, God,"

sang Elizabeth as she let the sand trickle through her fingers. Using Elizabeth's words with slight rearrangements the song "When I'm Very Happy" was written and became a favorite with several nursery groups (see page 220).

"Let's sing" is a frequent request in the nursery class. Sometimes this request will come while the children are building with blocks or playing with dolls or as they listen to a story.

Often two or three children will carry their chairs over close to the piano and sing together. Occasionally, one child will play the piano with one finger. Although he does not play the air of the song, the children may sing one of their favorite nursery songs to his accompaniment. Again there will be the request for the nursery leader to sing to the child and he will often echo the last words.

Songs for nursery children should be carefully selected. The words must be simple and easily understood, but should be more than a mere ditty. The song should be only one or two lines in length. Songs which use symbolism should be avoided. The three-year-old is literal. He does not understand references to children as sunbeams, nor can he understand such symbolic expressions as "giving hands or heart to Jesus." These expressions tend to confuse children and to set up wrong religious concepts.

The music for use with nursery children should be happy, light, cheerful and should combine dignity and simplicity. Nothing trite should be used. Folk songs and bits from the great composers, such as Handel and Beethoven, are excellent for children's music.

Only a good musician should be asked to play for the nursery children. Dorothy Baruch says "The teacher who knows both children and music is best fitted to stimulate the life-long interest in music. Some of the most beautiful music is the simplest, but in it is the breath of life. Children have a right to this."¹ The nursery class pianist needs to be keenly alive to the needs of little children. She must follow their interests, improvise frequently and interpret their play for them.

Recent studies of the child's singing voice reveal that workers with children have probably overstressed the high pitch for singing for little children. It is true that children's voices may be strained by low notes, but we find that children themselves use from middle C to C an octave above as the natural range for singing. All music for children should be played softly. Often the pianist may play as the children follow their varied activities.

Only a few songs are needed for the children to sing. Among

¹ Baruch, Dorothy W., *Parents and Children Go to School*. Chicago. Scott, Foresman & Company, 1939. Used by permission.

these there should be a Christmas song, a sharing or taking turns song, a happy springtime song and a thank-you song. One leader speaks of the "elastic nursery song." An example of such an elastic song is "Snow" (see page 222). This is a thank-you song for snow, but any other word may be substituted for the word snow.

The group will sing the same few songs over and over again throughout the year. The little child needs repetition in order to learn. He welcomes the familiar. Only one new song should be introduced or a less familiar recalled at any one time.

Confusion of ideas may result when least expected. We may sing to a child and he may seem to understand what we say. Later a surprising medley of words may come to us. Sometimes this is a result of the leader not pronouncing the words carefully. Again, it may be due to flash memory. The child gets the words at the time but when attempting to use them later, he finds that he has lost the original words so he supplies words.

Although the leader will teach only the one or two line songs in the nursery class, there are other songs that may be sung to the children. The leader will find a loose-leaf notebook most practical for her nursery songs. These may be clipped from her teacher's magazine or from the children's books (*My Book*, Parts I, II, III, IV). She may wish to arrange these songs under such headings as "Instrumental Music," "Songs for the Children to Sing," "Songs to Sing to the Children."

See bibliography, page 236, for a list of songbooks containing excellent songs for nursery age children.

CRADLE SONG

FRANZ SCHUBERT, Op. 98, No. 2
Slightly adapted*Very slowly and gently*

pp

mf

p

ppp ritard.

SECURITY

HAYDN

THE CHURCH BELLS

Happy

" Ding - dong, ding - dong," The church bells say. "Ding -
 dong, ding - dong," The church bells say.

From *Songs to Sing*, by Edna Shaw. Published by The Simcoe Publishing Company.
Adapted by permission of the author and publisher.

Songs for the Children to Sing

TAKING TURNS

MARY EDNA LLOYD

Moderately fast. Lightly and happily.

NATALIE ROBINSON

A musical score for two voices, featuring two staves of music. The top staff is in G major (two sharps) and common time (indicated by a '4'). The bottom staff is in C major (no sharps or flats) and common time. The lyrics are: "Tak - ing turns in work and play, Makes us hap - py ev - 'ry day, Tak - ing turns in work and play, Makes us hap - py ev - 'ry day, Ev - ry..... day.....". The music consists of eighth and sixteenth note patterns, with several measures ending in dotted half notes. Measures 1-4: Treble staff: D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D; Bass staff: D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D. Measures 5-8: Treble staff: D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D; Bass staff: D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D. Measures 9-12: Treble staff: D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D; Bass staff: D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D. Measures 13-16: Treble staff: D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D; Bass staff: D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D. Measures 17-20: Treble staff: D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D; Bass staff: D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D. Measures 21-24: Treble staff: D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D; Bass staff: D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D. Measures 25-28: Treble staff: D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D; Bass staff: D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D. Measures 29-32: Treble staff: D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D; Bass staff: D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D. Measures 33-36: Treble staff: D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D; Bass staff: D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D. Measures 37-40: Treble staff: D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D; Bass staff: D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D. Measures 41-44: Treble staff: D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D; Bass staff: D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D. Measures 45-48: Treble staff: D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D; Bass staff: D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D. Measures 49-52: Treble staff: D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D; Bass staff: D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D. Measures 53-56: Treble staff: D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D; Bass staff: D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D. Measures 57-60: Treble staff: D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D; Bass staff: D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D. Measures 61-64: Treble staff: D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D; Bass staff: D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D. Measures 65-68: Treble staff: D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D; Bass staff: D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D. Measures 69-72: Treble staff: D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D; Bass staff: D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D. Measures 73-76: Treble staff: D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D; Bass staff: D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D. Measures 77-80: Treble staff: D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D; Bass staff: D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D. Measures 81-84: Treble staff: D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D; Bass staff: D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D. Measures 85-88: Treble staff: D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D; Bass staff: D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D. Measures 89-92: Treble staff: D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D; Bass staff: D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D. Measures 93-96: Treble staff: D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D; Bass staff: D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D. Measures 97-100: Treble staff: D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D; Bass staff: D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D.

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LITTLE BABY JESUS

ETHEL L. SMITHER
Quietly

NATALIE ROBINSON

Musical score for "Little Baby Jesus" in G major, common time. The vocal part consists of two staves of music with lyrics. The first staff begins with a quarter note followed by eighth notes. The second staff begins with a half note followed by eighth notes. The lyrics are: "Lit - tle Ba - by Je - sus Slept so qui - et - ly," and "And His lov - ing moth - er cared for Him all the day." The piano accompaniment is provided below the vocal parts.

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CHRISTMAS MORNING

EDNA SHAW

EDNA SHAW

Musical score for "Christmas Morning" in C major, common time. The vocal part consists of two staves of music with lyrics. The first staff begins with a half note followed by eighth notes. The second staff begins with a half note followed by eighth notes. The lyrics are: "Ear - ly in the morn - ing, Christ - mas, Christ - mas morn - ing," and "Sil - ver bells, sil - ver bells tin - kle on my tree." The piano accompaniment is provided below the vocal parts.

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LEAVES ARE FALLING

MARY EDNA LLOYD

Leaves are fall - ing down on the ground.
Red and yel - low, green leaves and brown.
Pret - ty leaves fall down all a - round.
Pret - ty leaves fall down, down down down down.

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TEETER-TOTTER

With vigor

A. S. BOESEL

Here we go up and here we go down, tee-ter tot-ter to Lon-don town.

From *Sing and Sing Again*. Ann Sterling Boesel;
Published by Oxford University Press, 1938. Used by permission.

FRIENDS AT CHURCH

MARY EDNA LLOYD

EDNA M. SHAW

Thank you God this hap - py day for friends at church who sing and play.

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GOD'S CARE

WORDS AND MUSIC BY EDNA SHAW

Birds fly in the sky so blue, God who
 made them cares for you. Lit-tle chil-dren thank Him too.

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WHEN I'M VERY HAPPY

MARY EDNA LLOYD
Lightly

EDNA M. SHAW

When I'm ver - y hap - py This is what I sing,
 "Thank you God, I thank you, Just for ev - 'ry - thing."

Copyright, 1933, Mary Edna Lloyd.

SING, O SING

Brightly

Sing, O, sing for it is Spring.

Flow - ers bloom and rob - bins sing.

From *Singing Time*, by Satis N. Coleman and Alice G. Thorn. Published by John Day Company. Used by permission.

NEW CHICKS

EDNA M. SHAW

"Cluck-cluck," says moth - er hen, "my chicks, my chicks are out a - gain. They

are so small, I'll cover them all, Cluck - cluck," says moth - er hen.

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PITTER PATTER

MARY EDNA LLOYD
Lightly

ELsie L. DWYER

The musical score consists of three staves of music. The top staff is in G major, common time, with lyrics: "Pit - ter pat - ter Hear the rain - drops". The middle staff is in C major, common time, with lyrics: "Fall - ing on the ground Pit - ter pat - ter". The bottom staff is in C major, common time, with lyrics: "pit - ter pat - ter Fall - ing all a - round." The music features eighth-note patterns and some rests.

Copyright, 1934, Mary Edna Lloyd

SNOW

MARY EDNA LLOYD

EDNA SHAW

The musical score consists of two staves of music. The top staff is in G major, common time, with lyrics: "Snow, snow, snow, Thank you, God, for the snow, For the snow.". The bottom staff is in G major, common time, with a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and rests. The lyrics "Snow, snow, snow, Thank you, God, for the snow, For the snow." are repeated above the bottom staff.

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THE SNOWMAN

Playful

Musical notation for 'The Snowman' in 2/4 time. The first staff starts with a quarter note followed by eighth notes. The lyrics are: 'Snow - man, O! See him go! When the sun shines'. The second staff starts with a quarter note followed by eighth notes. The lyrics are: 'on the snow, See him go! See him go!'.

From *Songs to Sing*, by Edna Shaw. Used by permission of The Simcoe Publishing Company.

COME AND REST

Quietly

Musical notation for 'Come and Rest' in common time. The first staff starts with a quarter note followed by eighth notes. The lyrics are: 'Lit - tle boys, lit - tle girls, come and rest.'. The second staff starts with a quarter note followed by eighth notes. The lyrics are: 'Lit - tle boys, lit - tle girls, come and rest.' The third staff starts with a quarter note followed by eighth notes. The lyrics are: 'Lit - tle boys, lit - tle girls, come and rest.'

Adapted from *Singing Time*, by Satis N. Coleman and Alice G. Thorn. Published by John Day Company. Used by permission.

PARENTS OF NURSERY CLASS CHILDREN

NURSERY work is home work. The parents are the little child's first and greatest teachers. The nursery class can only supplement the work of the home. How may parents and teachers work together for the religious nurture of the three-year-old child?

Need for Parent Co-operation

The nursery class needs the parents. The child's family is a part of the child. Family joys, fears, anxieties react on the little child. He senses tense atmosphere. He absorbs security, calmness. The homes from which the children come influence the group that the nursery leader is seeking to guide religiously in this introduction to church life. Nursery class work cannot be carried on apart from parent work.

The parents wish to know how the nursery class leader plans for this first "out-of-the-home" religious nurture of the child. The leader will help the parents and may avoid difficulties for herself if she will have a list of suggestions typed and ready to give parents who come to observe in the nursery class. This list may be called "Hints for Observers." It might include such suggestions as:

Parents are requested to refrain from conversation with each other when any of the children are playing near them.

Parents are requested to co-operate by not laughing at the children nor at their remarks. If a child talks to a parent, it is to be expected that there may be opportunities to laugh with the child.

When the child enters the nursery class room the responsibility for his behavior is assumed by the nursery class leader. Parent visitors are requested to co-operate by recognizing the fact that all behavior problems will be handled by the nursery class leader.

When parents expect to visit during the entire session, they are requested to remove their wraps just as the children do.

The leader appreciates the opportunity to discuss with visitors any procedures including the activities, story or lack of story, the use of the prayer, the reason for certain songs.

This list may include other suggestions, but these will help the visitors to realize that they are welcome and that the leader has made certain preparations for their co-operation.

The nursery class will succeed only as there is close co-operation with the home. For example, if the home and the nursery class leader help the child to spontaneous reaching out toward God, worship develops. If the parents and the nursery class both provide opportunities for taking turns, the child learns that this is an acceptable form of behavior.

SOME WAYS PARENTS HELP

There are many ways in which parents and nursery class leaders may co-operate for the good of the children. Parents help the nursery class leader by seeking to understand her reasons for certain procedures. They may stop to ask why there was no story or they may ask why the children went outdoors to plant flowers during the session. The leader appreciates this interest on the part of the parents and is glad to explain her reasons. She will point out the religious values in having the little child plant the seed. She speaks of the feel of the earth and the fact that the child experiences something of wonder when he realizes that he may plant the seed but he cannot make it grow. There will be rain and sunshine and then the leaves. God makes the seed grow.

Parents may also co-operate by reading carefully each part of the pupils' material, *My Book* (Parts I, II, III, IV). Perhaps, the leader will add emphasis value if she points out certain hoped for results in informal conversation with the parents or through parents' meetings.

At times parents may help by volunteering their services during some special service in the church when the nursery leader may remain with the children during the church hour. Or, if it is customary for the nursery leader to remain in the nursery class throughout the morning worship service, the parents may take turns relieving the leader so that she may occasionally attend the morning worship.

When parents' meetings are held regularly, parents may take their responsibility for a few moments of social time together after the discussion. Very real help at such a meeting is given

when the parents enter the discussion and contribute from their experiences to help other parents and the leader. In some parents' groups the fathers and mothers of the nursery children have planned to set aside an evening once or twice a year when they meet in the nursery class room, examine the equipment with the leader and help renovate the equipment. Such an evening provides delightful opportunities for parents to visit together and get acquainted with each other and with the leaders. Fathers may take care of any carpentry work, painting or repairing that needs to be done. The mothers may wish to paint also or they may be willing to make new doll clothes and curtains. Sometimes these parents decide to make a special offering of money for the purchase of new equipment. Perhaps one of the fathers will be able to secure such equipment at wholesale price. These are practical ways in which parents and nursery class leaders co-operate for the happiness of the children in the group.

In some churches the parents take turns being responsible for getting the children in a neighborhood to nursery class on time.

Another phase of parent co-operation is when special talents are used in the interest of religious nurture of the little children. A mother who sings children's music very beautifully may be willing to come in to play with the children and then sing some of their well-loved nursery class songs. A doctor father might be willing to bring his stethoscope when the children are talking about the doctor friend (see *My Book*, Part II). He could play doctor with the children or he might bring a small pair of bathroom scales and let the children take turns being weighed. Better yet, such a doctor father might be willing to actually give his services for occasional physical checkups of the children or for a physical examination when there is danger of an epidemic in the community. It might be necessary to explain this type of service to all the parents so that they would be willing for such a physical examination. Where the plan could be developed, it might be a splendid way of safeguarding the health of the group.

A family with a garden or fish pond might co-operate with the nursery class through invitations for the children to visit their yard.

In some churches it is possible to have a parents' table in the vestibule or the social room, or the room in which the parents' group meets, or one of the adult class rooms. On this table books, pamphlets and magazines should be available with articles pertinent to the problems the parents are facing. The nursery class leader may be responsible for suggestions for this table. The committee of parents from the nursery class should carry the heaviest part of the responsibility, and at least one parent should be responsible each week for seeing that someone is at the table to check out the material to the parents who wish to borrow. Fathers should be encouraged to have just as great responsibility along this line as the mothers.

At Christmas time an exhibit of books and suitable toys for young children may be borrowed from local stores. Parents and the nursery leader may be responsible for such an exhibit. This exhibit should be selected carefully. Unfortunately many commercial toy houses do not consider the educational values of the toys. The nursery class leader will apply the same standards as those used in selection of toys for use in the nursery class.

Still another way in which parents may co-operate with the nursery class leader is to provide a calm, quiet atmosphere at home from which the child will leave to go to nursery class on Sunday morning. Children who are hurried into a nursery class situation frequently find it most difficult to adjust to other members of the group, and the entire session may be spent in helping them to adjust happily. The nursery class leader may be able to think of many other practical ways in which parents and nursery class leaders may co-operate.

WHEN PARENTS MAKE PROBLEMS

Unfortunately parents sometimes make very real problems for the nursery class leader. There is the parent who brings the child into the group and says "Now don't cry. Don't cry when I go." Such a parent expects the child to cry and usually he does.

There is the oversolicitous mother (sometimes this is the oversolicitous father). This person is anxious that the child shall make a good appearance, shall be equal to the other chil-

dren in social development, shall give evidence of being unusually bright. Among the oversolicitous parents is the one who has exceptionally high standards for the child's speech or urges him to be overly polite. Another form of the oversolicitous parent is the mother or father who will not let the child grow up. They coddle him, do everything for him, even tell him what to say, occasionally smother his initiative with their solicitude until he merely sits and lets them think and act for him. Sometimes such a parent is solicitous of a child's health and overcoddles him physically, also.

Another parent may overestimate or underestimate the child's ability. Much patience is required to help this parent to understand that the nursery leader is deeply interested in helping the child. Usually it is easier to bring up the parent's opinion of the child's ability rather than to help that parent realize that the child may not be capable of doing all that is expected of him and that this overstrain to meet too advanced expectations in the home has caused serious troubles which may develop into behavior problems or even personality difficulties.

Problems are frequently made when parents hurry the child too much or when there is a lack of understanding. This may be a lack of understanding of the child and his needs, or it may be too limited insight of the educational procedure in the nursery class. Again, a parent may make it difficult for the child to gain the most from the nursery class when they laughingly joke or perhaps criticize the leader, the minister or the church. The tone of voice influences the child's attitude. Long before he can understand the meaning of the words of the parents, he knows the implications of the tone. A most difficult problem arises when the parent decides to leave all religious nurture to the church. Parents should be helped to realize that there can be no adequate religious nurture of little children except as the church and home work together.

Parents' Conferences

Conferences with nursery class parents usually classify into three types. There are the regular meetings, the occasional meeting and the individual conference. Notice of regular or

occasional meetings may be tied or pinned to the child's coat on Sunday and so sent home. Notices may be mailed or the leader may telephone to the parents when the child is absent.

The church bulletin is another help in arousing the parents' interest in the nursery class. This church bulletin may carry notices of the regular or occasional meetings for parents of nursery children. It may also include short notes regarding any special nursery class news that would be of special interest to adult members of the church. Perhaps this would include a report of new equipment or of the freshly painted walls. The church bulletin helps to establish home contacts, and also to make persons who have no other contact with this youngest group in the church school conscious of the work of the nursery class.

REGULAR MEETINGS

For the most part these meetings should take the form of discussion groups rather than of lectures. Discussion helps the parents to feel that they are more truly contributing members of the group. As the nursery class leader guides these discussions she will seek to provide an informal atmosphere in which the parents will be comfortable and will wish to participate. She will raise questions and add comments from her background of experience and preparation. The pooled experiences of the parents will help more retiring members of the group to feel at ease. Often it is a satisfaction when parents find that other fathers and mothers face exactly the same problems that have been worrying them. They realize that their child is not different, that he is not naughty because he reacts in certain ways or does not do just as they think he should, that this is just a normal part of growing older.

Occasionally these regular meetings are fully organized groups with presiding officer, secretary and sometimes a treasurer. The dues from such meetings often help to add to the nursery class equipment, or may be used for some philanthropic purpose, or may add books to the parents' library.

These regular meetings may be carried on over a long period of time, or they may continue for a few months and then disband to reconvene a few months later. Some nursery groups

have regular meetings only four times a year and make one of the meetings a picnic for the fathers and mothers and nursery age children.

OCCASIONAL MEETINGS

In other nursery groups the plan for a regular meeting has not proved satisfactory, but the parents wish to get together less frequently but still to discuss some of the questions regarding the work of the nursery class or perhaps just to talk together with someone who knows little children.

INDIVIDUAL CONFERENCES

Perhaps the most valuable type of conference so far as meeting the need of the individual parent is concerned is the one with that parent. Occasionally the father and mother together will seek an opportunity to confer with the nursery leader. Again, just one parent may talk over with her some problem, or will report some happy occasion in the family. Perhaps the leader will do nothing but listen and be sympathetically understanding. Many parents need just such an understanding friend, but it takes much preparation and training for the leader to meet such problems adequately. Although she only listens at the time, she needs to know something of psychology that will help interpret for her what underlies the difficulty the parent is facing. She needs to know teaching methods and child development so that she can encourage a parent to realize that their child is developing along lines that are to be expected. This presupposes a knowledge of mental hygiene, physical development, social growth as well as religious nurture.

Home Contacts in the Nursery Class

As has been previously stated, nursery class work is really home work. The parents and other members of the family and the children in the neighborhood with whom the child plays, the persons with whom he lives and talks and plays all day are the ones who have the greatest influence upon his life. This then is a major reason for the need for nursery class leaders

to establish home contacts. On the other hand, most parents enjoy and desire the friendly association and informal visits with the nursery class leaders.

But most nursery class leaders are busy persons. Homemakers, or employed during the day, they give their time and effort as volunteer leaders in the nursery class on Sundays. They have very little time to visit in the homes of the children. When the leader is employed all day and the three-year-old child goes to bed early, an evening call means that the child is not present or that the mother is busy putting him to bed.

Personal visitation is the first thought in "home contacts" and yet there are other desirable contacts. It is often possible to find a young mother with the educational viewpoint which fits her for nursery work who is willing to assume the responsibility for visits in the home. Sometimes a parish visitor or a deaconess can render assistance at this point, but this home visitor and the nursery class leader need to confer frequently so that they may be sure that the purpose and plan of nursery class work is clearly understood. The nursery class leader should make it a point to visit just as often as possible in addition to the help of this home visitor.

The hearty, friendly co-operation of the pastor of the church may be another possibility. The nursery leader and the pastor who calls in the home need to work in close sympathy and understanding. Each should stand ready to explain the work of the church and to report to the other any special cases or items of interest.

Notes, letters, and telephone calls also help to establish contacts with the home. When a child is absent it takes but a few minutes to make a telephone call, and the parent is delighted that the leader has missed Joan and is calling to inquire about her.

A personal note written to the child who is ill is treasured by the child. There are other times than illness when notes are of value. The leader who wrote to Teddy to tell him how glad she was to hear the news that he had a new baby sister endeared herself to the three-year-old and also to the parents and grandparents! When Bryan had a difficult time adjusting to the group and finally made just a slight advance, the leader wrote him a note during the week. She mentioned the fact

that she was glad that he had played with them on Sunday and suggested that on the following Sunday she planned to bring some new balls. Perhaps he would enjoy playing ball with Jack and Martha and Ruth. This gave Bryan something to look forward to. The following Sunday he ran in asking, "Where are the new balls?"

When Louise had whooping cough and Marion was quarantined with scarlet fever, notes were written on Sunday evening and mailed to both homes. Some little interesting event of the morning session was told. Occasionally there was a picture enclosed that held interest for the three-year-old child. These notes were personal greetings. They carried good wishes from the leader to the members of that home.

Birthday notes are also appreciated by the parents and enjoyed by the children. Many leaders prefer to write brief friendly greetings on a small-size correspondence card. This takes a little more time and thought than the commercial cards, but it is more personal. There is one suggestion. When a birthday note is sent, the leader should be sure that it arrives *on the birthday* and not even one day later. This personal interest in the child is a real home contact.

Sometimes telephone calls are used to tell the mother of the child's advance in the social life or some other evidence that he is growing. When John, after weeks of passively sitting in nursery class watching the other children, suddenly entered into group activities and became one of a small group who enjoyed a game of "Ring Rosy" the leader called John's mother to tell her how happy they were at this evidence of his beginning to be a co-operative member of the group.

Added to the possibilities of visits, notes and telephone calls there are "seconds" of individual contact when mother or father brings the child to nursery class or comes for him after the session. Just a friendly sentence, a question as to Jane's health after her long siege of illness denotes interest, or perhaps the report that Ned did not seem quite like himself this morning. Had he been emotionally upset or ill within the last few days? Such inquiries may help the parent to realize the leader's personal interest in each child.

This opportunity for brief chats with the parents should never be used for complaints about the child's misbehavior. If

there is any discipline problem in the nursery class, usually it may be traced to one or two reasons. It may be misunderstanding on the part of the leader due to her own physical unfitness or to her lack of knowledge of the need and interest of little children, or the second cause may be impending illness or physical strain, emotional stress, or exhaustion of the child.

When the inquiry is made in a tactful, sympathetic way, the parent understands that the leader is not complaining about the child but has asked because of real interest. Frequently the busy parent in the home does not realize just what is happening. Frances may not be feeling well but she is not really ill. The nursery leader who notices that the child does not act in her usual happy way may help the parent to avert a serious illness.

On the other hand, the leader who meets the child only once a week needs the assistance and explanation that the parent offers so that the child may be more fully understood, his needs faced and ways of meeting these needs more carefully considered.

The home is the first, the greatest and the most lasting influence in the life of the child. The nursery leader wishes to supplement this work of the home by introducing the three-year-old in his first contacts with the church. As a correlative of this she needs to come close to the home life of the child. She needs to help the parents to know why she has planned an informal homelike situation in the church. Visits in the home and all friendly contacts with the parents or children help to establish a confidence and understanding, a sense of comradeship in the common task of helping to guide the religious nurture of little children.

B I B L I O G R A P H Y

- ALLEN, MARIE LOUISE. *A Pocketful of Rhymes*. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1939. A book of delightful childlike rhymes, based on sensory experiences and daily activities of preschool children. The simplicity of the language and the photographs that accompany the verses add to their values.
- ALSCHULER, ROSE H. *Two to Six*. New York: William Morrow and Co., 1937. Suggestions for parents and teachers of the general principles of childhood education and formation of desirable habits of routine. There is included bibliography of books for children and a bibliography for reference of parents and teachers.
- ARLITT, ADA HART. *The Child from One to Twelve*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1931. This practical psychology is a valuable guide to parents and teachers of young children who wish help as they seek to understand little children, and to find ways of meeting behavior problems common in the everyday life of the child.
- ARLITT, ADA HART. *Family Relationships*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1942. A study of home and family life from a psychological point of view. Chapters VIII, IX and X are especially valuable to parents and teachers of young children. These chapters discuss in a practical way, "Parent-Child Relationships," "The Children Within the Family" and "The Relation of Child to Child."
- BARUCH, DOROTHY WALTER. *Parents and Children Go to School*. Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1939. Parents who wish a clear understanding of the values of nursery school to both parents and children will find this book enlightening, helpful and stimulating. There are clear cut descriptions of the children in preschool; the physical, emotional, social, mental and aesthetic development; the need for parent education as a part of nursery school education. Throughout the text, the importance of security is stressed. The excellent bibliographies add to its resource values.
- BORIE, LYSBETH BOYD. *Poems for Peter*. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1928. This book of poems illustrated with scissorcuts is of interest to adults who enjoy poems about children. "Soon," "Daddy Knows Best," "Silly Mother" and "Wish I Knew" are especially recommended to help adults understand the literal-mindedness of little children.
- BRO, MARGUERITE HARMON. *When Children Ask*. Chicago: Willett, Clark and Co., 1940. Most of the children who ask the questions in this book are older than nursery class age. But the book is helpful to parents and teachers who wish to clear their own thinking regarding religion, ethics, sex, or "the world without and within."
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- DE SCHWEINITZ, KARL. *Growing Up*. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1930. The subtitle of this book describes the contents, "The Story of How We Become Alive, Are Born and Grow Up." It, together with the leaflet, "Dangers and Advantages of Sex Instruction for Children," by the same author and published by The National Committee for Mental Hygiene gives help in sex education for parents and teachers.
- DIXON, C. MADELEINE. *High, Wide and Deep*. New York: The John Day Co., Inc., 1938. A book written to help parents and teachers learn about children from children. It stresses the values of daily activities as broadening experiences in the life of the child. It portrays the work and play of a group of nursery school children, from which the author makes certain deductions and points up possible procedures.
- ETS, MARIE HALL. *The Story of a Baby*. New York: The Viking Press, 1939. This book describes the growth of a baby through embryonic changes to birth. The pictures and text interpret for parents and teachers interesting facts of human embryology.
- FOSTER, JOSEPHINE C., and MATTSON, MARION L. *Nursery School Education*. New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1939. An excellent source book on the development and possible guidance of young children, and the methods, equipment and program as planned for progressive nursery schools. The practical suggestions offered make this book a valuable reference for the beginning teacher, the teacher of long experience and the mother who wishes to introduce practical nursery school methods into her own home.
- FOX, H. W. *The Child's Approach to Religion*. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1929. This book, written in conversational style, is one that every parent and teacher would

- find helpful. Chapter V, "God as Father," and Chapter VI, "Prayer" are of great value to parents and teachers who wish to "think through" themselves, in order that they may give religious guidance to children.
- KAWIN, ETHEL. *The Wise Choice of Toys*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934. A series of lectures prepared for sales persons in the toy department of Marshall Field and Company's store. The book gives valuable help in describing most suitable toys for children at various age levels, and with different interests and abilities.
- KERR, ANNIE B. *So Gracious Is the Time*. New York: The Woman's Press, 1938. A book of stories of Christmas customs of nine nationalities. Not for use with children. It is suggested for parents and teachers who wish a background of traditional Christmas festivities as they celebrate this season of joy and goodwill.
- LLOYD, MARY EDNA. *My Book* (Parts I, II, III, IV). Nashville: The Graded Press, 1942. These are the four books for three-year-olds to accompany the text RELIGIOUS NURTURE IN NURSERY CLASS AND HOME. The brief stories, with accompanying photographs, are based on the interests, activities, experiences and abilities of three-year-old children. A few Bible stories are included.
- MEEK, LOIS HAYDEN. *Your Child's Development and Guidance Told in Pictures*. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1940. The 101 photographs, 62 line drawings and the diagrams and charts included, make this book attractive and easily read. The author seeks to show how the development of a child is dependent upon factors within and factors without. Written primarily for parents, it is equally valuable to teachers.
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- MITCHELL, LUCY SPRAGUE, and CO-AUTHORS. *Another Here and Now Story Book*. New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1937. Another book of stories suited to the needs and interest of little children. Of added value for teachers, is the introduction to each section, as for example, for nursery class leaders and parents, the chapters "Two-Year-Oldness," "Three-Year-Oldness," and "Four-Year-Oldness."
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- SMITHER, ETHEL L. *The Use of the Bible with Children*. New York: The Methodist Book Concern, 1937. This book is helpful to parents and teachers for their own background of Bible study. Chapter V, "The Bible and Nursery Children" is fundamental to religious nurture of nursery class children in the church school and home.
- STRAIN, FRANCES BRUCE. *Being Born*. New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1936. A book on the subject of human reproduction. It is based on sound, modern principles of sex education and is recommended for parents and teachers who wish a book that will furnish the adequate information on this topic.

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—*Sung Under the Silver Umbrella.* New York: The Macmillan Co., 1939. A book of poems for young children, selected by the Literature Committee of the Association for Childhood Education. Included are a few poems that nursery class children enjoy.

WASSON, VALENTINA P. *The Chosen Baby.* New York: Carric and Evans, Inc., 1939.

The story of an adopted child as told by the author to her four-year-old adopted son.

WEILL, BLANCHE C. *Through Children's Eyes.* New York: Island Workshop Press Co-op, Inc., 1940. A child psychologist describes in a simple, straightforward manner, the ways in which she has helped parents to understand the reasons that prompted behavior problems, and the ways in which she helped the children to gain confidence and a desire to be happy, co-operative members of their family.

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BAKER, CLARA BELLE, and KOHLSAAT, CAROLINE. *Songs for the Little Child* (Illustrated Edition). New York: The Abingdon Press, 1938. Contains one hundred songs. A few may be sung by preschool children, and others may be sung to the children.

BOESEL, ANN STERLING. *Sing and Sing Again.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1938. The tone play stories are planned for work with individual children. The words of the songs are within the understanding and interest of nursery class children. Much of the music is rhythmic phrases from operas, folk tunes, and the great composers.

COLEMAN, SATIS N., and THORN, ALICE G. *Singing Time and Another Singing Time.* New York: The John Day Co. Both of these books contain a few songs that nursery children may sing, and others that may be sung to the children.

KENAGY, N. M., and ARNOLD, F. M. *Musical Experiences of Little Children.* Cincinnati: Willis Music Co., 1932. A few of the rhythms and songs in this book are of special interest to nursery class children.

SHAW, EDNA M. *Songs to Sing.* Buffalo, N. Y.: The Simcoe Publishing Company. A few carefully selected songs, written especially for nursery class children.

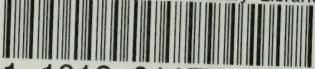
—*Music Education in the Elementary School.* Sacramento: California State Department of Education, 1939. An excellent book for teachers who wish a text on general, comprehensive music education program, as a foundation for their study of music for young children.

FOR THE LEADER'S AND PARENTS' OWN BIBLICAL BACKGROUND

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—*The Abingdon Bible Commentary.* New York: The Abingdon Press, 1929. This one volume commentary is authoritative, and concise. It presents adequate exposition and interpretation. Helpful to the parent and teacher for their own spiritual enrichment.

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